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CONTRACT/GRANT/AGREEMENT NO: 2009-49400-05876 **PROPOSAL NO:** 2009-03928

START: 01 SEP 2009 **TERM:** 31 AUG 2012

GRANT AMT: \$730,722 **GRANT YR:** 2009

WARD TOTAL: \$730,722

INITIAL AWARD YEAR: 2009

INVESTIGATOR: Nelson, C. J.

PERFORMING INSTITUTION:

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ENHANCING THE SUCCESS OF MISSOURI'S BEGINNING FARMERS

NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY: This "standard grant" proposal addresses the opportunity to dynamically enhance the success of beginning farmers, including limited resource farmers, in four targeted geographic regions of Missouri. Through a strong combination of new and existing programs for beginning farmers, including the use of online information tools, we will provide intensive education and training programs for over 600 beginning farmers while reaching an even larger audience through complimentary approaches. Many of the expected participants in our programs will be new to agriculture and want to farm part-time, or existing part-time farmers who would like to farm full-time. We expect to serve a variety of age groups and will provide opportunities for all decision-making members of a farming family to participate in our programs. We have an interdisciplinary team of educators very experienced in sustainable agriculture leading this project. The proposed project is a partnership of the Jefferson Institute, a nonprofit organization, and the University of Missouri, with collaboration from Lincoln University (an 1890 institution), the Missouri Department of Agriculture, and the Missouri Farmers Union. This project will address three of the four main BFRDP program priorities, specifically production and management strategies that enhance land stewardship, business management and decision support strategies that enhance financial viability, and marketing strategies to enhance competitiveness of beginning farmers. Through creative and carefully planned beginning farmer programs, we expect to enhance entrepreneurship, support

OBJECTIVES: The general goal of this project is to engage beginning farmers from across Missouri in a variety of education and training programs which contribute to their success as producers in a sustainable manner. Specific objectives are to: 1. Strengthen and expand a recently created multi-week Missouri-based training program, "Grow Your Farm," for beginning farmers. (a) Develop a comprehensive marketing plan for increasing enrollment and expanding offerings of this course from one current region to four targeted regions in Missouri. (b) Incorporate a mentorship component to the this multi-week course. (c) Recruit and train area extension agents across Missouri to offer the "Grow Your Farm" course in their portion of the state. Focus will be on four targeted regions of Missouri with relatively high concentrations of beginning farmers and good direct marketing opportunities in regional cities. 2. Create and provide a second tier of training courses and workshops on specific enterprise areas, such as fruits, vegetables, specialty grains, or small livestock, with a focus on approaches suited to small acreage farmers interested in sustainability and direct marketing. 3. Test, evaluate, and implement new online tools for information delivery and farmer networking. 4. Develop and distribute training modules based on an existing "Returning to the Farm" course, so that these modules can be used in many different locations across Missouri to help with issues such as transferring farm assets, acquiring farmland, developing credit and securing capital.

APPROACH: This project will primarily utilize a two-tier approach to beginning farmer training with complimentary training and delivery using online tools and other approaches. Beginning farmers will be encouraged to start with an introductory course and then move on to one or more appropriate enterprise-specific workshops or courses. In the case of most

beginning farmers who will receive training through this project, the first course they will take will be an enhanced version of "Grow Your Farm," which is already being used for training beginning farmers in east central Missouri. Some individuals might enter into our program through the "Return to the Farm" course. The second tier of training will go into more depth in specific enterprise training, such as sheep and goat production, fruit production, vineyard management, specialty grains, or vegetables for direct marketing. These "second tier" training courses and workshops will be focused on particular enterprise areas as defined by the interests of beginning farmers in each region. We will carefully consider the interests of those who have participated in the Grow Your Farm course and desire further farm education opportunities. We will specifically survey the Grow Your Farm participants and other interested individuals to determine the exact workshop offerings and time of the year in which to offer the workshops, but most will be winter or early spring. Our special topic courses will typically be offered as two or three day intensive workshops, where participants can either commute or come to the site for one or two nights. Each workshop will involve presentations from relevant experts on the enterprises being discussed. These experts will be drawn from University of Missouri Extension, Lincoln University Small Farm Program, state and federal agency staff, and Jefferson Institute staff. We will also make use of farmer expertise, involving at least one experienced producer as a presenter at each workshop, and often providing a farmer panel to have a discussion with the workshop participants. While a focus of these workshops will be on production practices, each of these workshops will include discussion of environmental quality and farm safety, and will assist the producers with developing a marketing plan, including direct marketing opportunities. In an effort to reach a larger number of producers and stimulate interactions among producers who are geographically dispersed, we will creatively employ use of new online tools to support this project and our education efforts. Our mission here is to provide inexpensive ways for producers to network together to encourage collaboration and support of these farming enterprises; to provide information and resources they will find valuable in creating their enterprises; and to provide a forum for mentoring and support. The Returning to the Farm Program is an established teaching and outreach course that has been delivered by a team of University of Missouri faculty for more than two decades. As part of this project, we will develop modules from the existing course contents that can be used individually or as a package by other instructors.

PROGRESS: 2009/09 TO 2012/08

OUTPUTS: Grow Your Farm: Held 12 8 week courses focused on business planning with 186 participants representing 86 different farming operations. Experienced farmers used as class mentors for 10 classes after Year 1. Participants learned from the farmer(s), but mentors as well. Short-courses: 21 1-2 day workshops were held with a total of 556 participants. (Some participants attended more than one workshop, but we have over 400 unique names in our database system.)
Online Learning Tools: We created online tools to house resources as well as to facilitate relationships and mentoring. We created a website with resources adapted for BFs in Missouri, which had 15,367 hits by 8/31/12. Between 2/3 and 3/4 of valuation survey respondents used the website for resources, more than other online tools. Created an Online Learning Community (OLC) which enrolled over 208 members. It consisted of three parts; 1) Live monthly webinars that were recorded and archived. The OLC contains 42 webinars/power points. Over 500 participants viewed the webinars in real time. 2) Deposited diverse materials collected for 14 different workshop into the OLC. 3) Initiated online forums to discuss particular topics of interest to members (this failed). Used social media to promote interaction and disseminate resources. 82 people joined Facebook community and use it to post and answer questions. About 1/2 of participants used the Missouri Beginning Farming blog to access information. The blog had 69,221 visits with a total of 121,673 page views, with 700 visits on a weekly basis, and an average of ~100 visits daily. Some participants note social media help with building BFC community in Missouri. When asked how these online tools had helped their farming operating, participants responded that it "Promotes a feeling of community." "Connected me with producers." "Reinforcing [sic] lessons learned, encouragement in the stories and progress of others," "Reading what other people are doing is helpful. It sometimes solves problems before I know it is a problem." Database: Constructed a database of participants both to advertise program activities and to help with evaluation. Currently our database contains 405 participants, including 205 males and

00 females. Returning to the Farm: After completing the RTF Course and Workshop during the spring of 2010, the course was updated and instructional materials were improved. RTF was taught in 2011 and 2012 with 24 students. During the semester RFT brought the students' family members and other business partners to campus where 55 participants explored topics for going back to the family farm. In 2012, presentations were videotaped and used to train 12 extension educators on issues pertaining to returning to the farm. These videotapes will be housed in our OLC. Evaluation: Evaluator conducted in-depth evaluation to supplement outcome information collected by staff. She observed 5 GYF and 9 short-courses and did phone interviews with 10 GYF and 15 short course participants. Created a mentor survey and conducted interviews with the four GYF mentors. She tracked 5 participants over the course of the project, conducting interviews in years 2 and 3. PARTICIPANTS: Robert Myers PI Jefferson Institute oversaw project and led shortcourses from inception to December 2011. He then transitioned to another job outside of Jefferson Institute (JI). Jerry Nelson, president of the Jefferson Institute board of directors became project director. He provided approximately 10% of his time to project administration. Mary Hendrickson, Co-PI, oversaw the project from the University of Missouri (MU), including convening monthly project meetings and managing the budget. She helped to plan and implement workshops and OLC activities and also oversaw evaluation. Debi Kelly, University of Missouri, directed planning of the OLC activities, maintained the OLC content and managed social media including Facebook and the Missouri Beginning Farming blog. She also planned and implemented Grow Your Farm courses with local extension specialists in four regions of the state. Kelly also helped to train participating Lincoln University Innovative Small Farm Outreach program workers, and coordinated activities with Lincoln University Extension. Catherine Bohnert planned and implemented workshops for Jefferson Institute and maintained demonstration trials at the Institute. Ken Schneeberger assisted with Grow Your Farm courses, and provided outreach assistance. Kevin Moore oversaw the Returning to the Farm program and assisted in maintaining the project website. Strong collaborations emerged in Year 3 with the Growing Growers program in Kansas City which is coordinated on the Missouri side by Marlin Bates, Univ of MO extension horticultural specialist, and Katherine Nixon, Lincoln University Small Farm Program outreach specialist. In addition, Patrick Byers, Univ of MO extension horticultural specialist in the SW region assisted with the Blueberry School workshops. Trish Grim, independent evaluator and member of Sandhills Farm, performed evaluation services. TARGET AUDIENCES: Our target audience fell into several different categories. We generally targeted beginning farmers interested in direct marketing or alternative farming practices, and oriented our programming in this fashion. Most of our participants came from small or very small farms, and many of them farmed in urban or peri-urban areas. 11% of respondents to our survey considered themselves socially disadvantaged farmers (someone who has been subjected to racial or ethnic prejudices because of their identity as a member of a group without regard to their individual qualities). About half our participants were women. We used several methods to reach our audience. First, we conducted face-to-face workshops with experienced extension and farmer presenters, and included tours of working farms. Workshops were held in four different regions of the state and usually lasted 1.5 days. Second, we utilized horizontal learning through farmer to farmer sharing in our monthly webinar series. Experience farmers walk through their operations and show how they have developed successful operations and use their experience to answer beginners' questions. These webinars were complimented by resource materials provided through extension. Third, we facilitated a farm planning course GYF in different regions of the state by experienced extension educators. We recruited experienced farmers to attend the course and help students understand actual farming problems. Fourth, we used traditional classroom teaching to train farmers who are returning to farm operations. Finally, we experimented with social media as a way to encourage networking and learning among farmers from many backgrounds. PROJECT MODIFICATIONS: Funding from this grant allowed us to consider developing a mentoring component to GYF, something that beginning farmers had been asking for. We were unable to recruit enough mentors to work with individual participants, so we experimented with asking an experienced farmer to attend each GYF class, including farm tours. This farmer was paid a small stipend (\$500) to be the class mentor at the Warrenton location in the first year of our project. The class mentor was a huge success with lots of knowledge transfer from farmer to participants, particularly as he was there to be a sounding

board and offer comments at each class. We added a class mentor to each GYF location. Not only did the participants learn from the farmer (or in two cases, the farm couple), but the mentors learned as well. In one case, the mentors, a farm couple doing grass-based farming, commented they would be willing to be "class" mentors even if there wasn't an honorarium or mileage. This same farm couple is now mentoring one-on-one with a beginning grass-based farmer who participated in the class they served. *Creating Dynamic Online Tools for Mentoring: Our original conception was to use online tools to connect beginning farmers with more experienced farmers. In the first part of Year Two, we asked experienced farmers to develop a webinar presentation, present it from the comfort of their homes on a Monday evening and then spend the next two Monday evenings in a Q&A session with attendees from the previous presentation. We hoped this would spark more relationship building than just a webinar. Beginning farmers loved hearing from experienced farmers. Here are some testimonials to how well this has worked: "Essential!!! I have heard over and over from producers who are forced to keep good record keeping when being certified organic, I was so dreading having to keep the books, but now (2nd or 3rd year), I think it has been the best thing that could have ever happened to our farm" "SUPER KUDOS to all that thought of this idea & have implemented it. What a fantastic way to learn without the expense of everyone having to find a place, the expense of fuel to get there, etc! All of our experienced farmers have offered their contact information during the webinar and we know at least some of them have received follow-up calls. In addition, during the webinar presentations, especially on the Q&A, we saw a number of discussions between participants in the chat box. We paid farmers to develop and deliver their presentations and to do the Q&A sessions. We then archived the content of the webinars in the OLC. Once we established the OLC, we realized how it could function as a depository of resources that are not easily stored online in a website format. We added PowerPoint presentations and videos from workshops.

IMPACT: 2009/09 TO 2012/08

Of GYF participants interviewed, 50% developed business plan, 60% began direct sales from their farm within 1 year of the course (their first commercial sales), and 100% increased production. All started 1 or more new enterprises. Participants expressed the value of GYF "I went to the class for one thing and that was to do a business plan. I had to go through FSA to get a farm loan. [GYF] walked me through everything with my business plan. [Then] I walked the FSA officer thru my business plan to get a 200,000 loan to buy the farm. GYF was the reason I could get this farm." "GYF made me realize the importance of diversity on the farm ... by adding chickens we will diversify from just row crops." "We didn't have a strategy but the class gave us one. Now we are focused in on row crops, pastured chickens and then we'll add pastured pork later this year." Short Course Participants Interviews: Because of workshop: 75% (who did not previously own land) purchased land, 80% currently installing basic infrastructure, 87% changed farming/land management practices, 47% changed marketing strategy, 53% began sales first year sales after, 87% implemented an environmental quality practice, 60% increased local food sales and farm revenue, and 93% increased their overall farm production. Of the 15 interviewed, 12 started 1 or more new farm enterprises. Participants said: "if I hadn't been to the tours [I] wouldn't be where I am now. It's worth so much to step on somebody else's property." "It is really valuable. Such a leap going from being a gardener to a farmer. Helped create a commercial mind set and transition. It's about production now." 2 participants reflect program accomplishments: 1) With no ag background, couple bought 50 acres in 2010. Took 5 short-courses, which "led [them] to think [they] really could do it." 2012 farm is sole income. Plan to expand production to 2 acres and begin raising sheep for sales, and to be certified organic. "If it wasn't for these courses and classes, we wouldn't be doing what we're doing." Planned to have a CSA and a u-pick operation but decided to switch to farmers market sales. Eliminated plans to grow grapes and fruit trees commercially due to the challenges of growing organically. After BF program, this couple, purchased land and a tractor, constructed a high-tunnel with EQIP funds, created a business plan, changed marketing strategy, decided to become certified organic, and implemented cover cropping and soil building into their farming system. 2) After taking GYF, she decided to sell local foods rather than farm. Started a grocery, CSA, and wholesale distribution business. She says "GYF gave me the confidence to go ahead and start... The market was an option for on the ground, actual research, field research" to figure out what the supply and demand for local food is in the metro area. Received MDA grant to offer EBT

monthly subscription program and 12 families are participating. 2013 goal is selling 90 regular shares and 24 EBT shares. hired 1 employee to manage the retail side. In 2011, tripled her local food sales and increased overall business revenue by 100%. Project 2012 revenue will surpass first year.

PUBLICATIONS (not previously reported): 2009/09 TO 2012/08

- . MU Extension. 2010 Knoll Family who attended the Warrenton Grow Your Farm course discuss what the Grow Your Farm course has done for them. The video can be found at http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bqpogw_gjGM.
- . MU Extension. 2011. Greg and Nancy Rasmussen, mentors for the Mt Vernon Grow Your Farm course tell about what it means to them to be mentors for the course. The video can be found at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gfh9kTabRsQ>.
- . Hendrickson, M. Kelly, D. Bohnert, C. 2011. Missouri Beginning Farmers Program Newsletter. Volume 1, Issue 1. January.
- . Hendrickson, M. Kelly, D. Bohnert, C. 2011 Missouri Beginning Farmers Program Newsletter. Volume 1, Issue 2. June.
- . Wilson, Jacob, Debi Kelly, Patrick Byers and Jaime C. Pinerio. 2012. "Hands-on Workshops on Integrated Pest Management for Beginner Small Farmers in Missouri." Poster presented at the 6th National Small Farm Conference. Memphis, TN. September.
- . Hendrickson, M. D. Kelly, K. Schneeberger, K. Moore and C. Bohnert. 2011. "Enhancing the Success of Missouri's Beginning Farmers: Creating an Online Learning Community." Poster presented at the USDA Project Director's Meeting, Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program. Ft. Collins, CO. December.
- . Hendrickson, M. D. Kelly, K. Schneeberger, K. Moore and C. Bohnert. 2012. "Enhancing the Success of Missouri's Beginning Farmers: Creating an Online Learning Community." Poster presented at the Southern Sustainable Agriculture Working Group annual conference. Little Rock. January.
- . Hendrickson, M. D. Kelly, K. Schneeberger, K. Moore and C. Bohnert. 2012. "Enhancing the Success of Missouri's Beginning Farmers: Creating an Online Learning Community." Poster presented at national Young Farmers and Young Farmwives Conference. Grand Rapids. February.

PROGRESS: 2011/09/01 TO 2012/08/31

OUTPUTS: Grow Your Farm: Held two courses, with 42 people participating. One was held in Columbia, MO with 11 farms and another in St. Clair Missouri with 14 farms. Short Courses: We held 9 workshops focused on production and marketing for produce growers which reached 281 total participants. These included: 3 Integrated Pest Management workshops in East Central, West Central, and Southwest areas, 1 Wholesale Success workshop focusing on food safety and accessing wholesale produce markets, 2 workshops in conjunction with the Growing Growers Program in Kansas City focusing on small fruit production and integrated pest management, and 1 workshop focused on helping Hispanic farmers diversify their farms. On Line Tools: We added 23 powerpoint presentations and webinars to our Online Learning Community. 382 people join our Facebook community and use it to post and answer questions. We maintained program website. Had 9,221 visits to Missouri Beginning Farming blog with a total of 121,673 page views. Returning to the Farm: Presentations from a one-day training session were taped and prepared for training extension professionals to work with beginning farmers. One-day training session for extension educators was conducted. Evaluation: The evaluator observed two GYF courses and five workshops. She conducted 15 phone interviews with participants from both GYF and the various short courses. I created a mentor survey and conducted interviews with the four Grow Your Farm mentors. The evaluator developed a 2 year follow-up interview form and conducted second interviews with five of the participants previously interviewed in Year 2 of the grant. Other Activities: Presented to 50 young farmer families on "Farm to Table Marketing" at the Missouri Farm Bureau Young Farmers and Ranchers Conference. We participated in the following conferences with exhibits and outreach: * Minority and Limited Resource Farmers Conference: exhibit at this inaugural conference held by Lincoln University (1890s institution). Nearly 75 socially disadvantaged farmers attended this new conference in March 2012 over a 2 day period. * Great Plains Growers Conference in January 2012 where nearly 600 farmers from Missouri, Kansas, Iowa, Nebraska and South Dakota attended sessions on vegetable and fruit production. * National Small Farm Holiday Trade Show and Conference. This conference, held in Columbia, MO, attracted farmers from across the entire US

and several foreign countries to find creative and innovative ideas for small farms. Over 3,000 farmers attended this conference in November 2011. Presented poster at Southern SAWG Conference. Young Farmers and Ranchers and Young Farm Wives Conference: Had a poster exhibit of the Missouri Beginning Farmers Program at the Young Farmers and Young Farm Wives Conference of the held in Grand Rapids, MI. Farmers from across the entire US attended this annual conference that highlights leadership, risk management, internet marketing, farm succession, communicating with consumers and other topics aimed at helping young farmers achieve success. Over 1,000 farmers attended this conference in February 2012 over a 3 day period. PARTICIPANTS: In Year 3, Jerry Nelson, president of the Jefferson Institute board of directors became project director. He provided approximately 10% of his time to project administration. Catherine Bohner planned and implemented workshops for Jefferson Institute and maintained demonstration trials at the Institute. Mary Hendrickson directed the project for the University of Missouri and helped to plan and implement workshops and OLC activities and also oversaw evaluation. Debi Kelly, University of Missouri, directed planning of the OLC activities, maintained the OLC content and managed social media including Facebook and the Missouri Beginning Farming blog. She also planned and implemented Grow Your Farm courses with local extension specialists in four regions of the state. Kelly also helped to train participating Lincoln University Innovative Small Farm Outreach program workers, and coordinated activities with Lincoln University Extension. Ken Schneeberger assisted with Grow Your Farm courses, and provided outreach assistance. Kevin Moore oversaw the Returning to the Farm program and assisted in maintaining the project website. *Strong collaborations emerged in Year 3 with the Growing Growers program in Kansas City which is coordinated on the Missouri side by Marlin Bates, Univ of MO extension horticultural specialist, and Katherine Nixon, Lincoln University Small Farm Program outreach specialist. In addition, Patrick Byers, Univ of MO extension horticultural specialist in the SW region assisted with the Blueberry School workshops. Trish Grim, independent evaluator and member of Sandhills Farm, performed evaluation services. TARGET AUDIENCES: Our target audience were beginning farmers interested in sustainable and/or alternative forms of production. We worked with Lincoln University to recruit socially disadvantaged farmers for our program activities. Approximately half of our participants were women. Approximately 11% of our participants considered themselves socially disadvantaged (based on race or ethnicity). PROJECT MODIFICATIONS: Nothing significant to report during this reporting period.

IMPACT: 2011/09/01 TO 2012/08/31

Short-Term Outcomes: Grow Your Farm: 8 farms completed business plan; 10 farms-partial business plan; 7 farms-better direction with farming enterprises. Increased knowledge in each 8 class sessions (3.29-3.97 - 5 pt scale). *Short-courses: Blueberry School: Participants increased knowledge in 5 topic areas(2.21 to 3.12 - 4-pt scale). *IPM Workshops- participants increased knowledge of 6 topic areas (1.69-2.09 - 5 pt scale). 92% plan to incorporate one IPM practice; 92% earned economic/environmental benefits of IPM. "Live insect samples were a wonderful; got to see/compare them to those that are look-alikes." *Finding Wholesale Success-Increased knowledge in safe post-harvest handling of produce & wholesale marketing in a range of .40-1.27 (4 pt scale) on 8 topic areas. Within 6 months, 20% planned to create farm brand, another 33% to change cooling practices, 33% to change storage practices, 25% to create on-farm safety plan, 15% plan to become GAP certified & 15% to market wholesale. *Intro to Small Fruit Production-Participants increased knowledge in production practices of small fruit in a range of 1.2-1.92 (10 pt scale). Most will consider small fruit as a part of their market offerings. 90% indicated to pursue more info on small fruit production; they are interested in learning more on the subject through similar workshop experiences. *Insect, Disease, & Weed Management-Knowledge rose from average rating of 4.64-6.91 (1-10 scale). 90% will approach pest management differently. *Building Capacity/Empowering New, Diversifying & Hispanic Small Farmers-At end of workshop, 100% (up 33% at workshop start) were knowledgeable of GAP, 100% (up 12% at the start) were aware of IPM. *Mid-Term Outcomes: Practices & Behaviors: half the participants used new production techniques, one-third used new marketing techniques, wrote business plan, implemented new pest controls, used new organic techniques or applied for federal farm programs. Another fifth completed a whole farm plan/established new enterprise. Two-thirds reported 6-7 new relationships with more experienced farmers. Garnered

minimum of 177 new relationships between beginning & experienced farmers. Similar # of participants reported connecting with new farmers (over 200 new contacts). Half of participants reported relationships provided a place to share new ideas, support (20% reported this), & networking opportunities (15% reported this). Relationships developed via 3 aspects: Grow Your Farm courses, workshops & online learning community-OLC. 40% of participants enrolled in the OLC. All use OLC to access info. *Overall Outcomes: 4 themes emerged when asked the single most valuable thing gained: Info/Resources; Improved Practices; Networking & Support; Business/Financial Planning/Assessment. 20% improved their production practices. 20% indicated networking was most valuable. 10% indicated support received from other participants/staff was important. 20% indicated info/resources were key. 15% reported business/financial planning was extremely valuable. 10% indicated assessing their operations had been most valuable. "The mentoring/collaboration with other farmers outweigh any single lesson."

PUBLICATIONS: 2011/09/01 TO 2012/08/31

. Wilson, Jacob, Debi Kelly, Patrick Byers and Jaime Pinero. 2012. "Hands-on Workshops on Integrated Pest Management for Beginner Small Farmers in Missouri." Poster presented at the 6th National Small Farm Conference. Memphis, TN. September.

. Hendrickson, M. D. Kelly, K. Schneeberger, K. Moore and C. Bohnert. 2011. "Enhancing the Success of Missouri's Beginning Farmers: Creating an Online Learning Community." Poster presented at the USDA Project Director's Meeting, Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program. Ft. Collins, CO. December.

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. Hendrickson, M. D. Kelly, K. Schneeberger, K. Moore and C. Bohnert. 2012. "Enhancing the Success of Missouri's Beginning Farmers: Creating an Online Learning Community." Poster presented at national Young Farmers and Young Farmwives Conference. Grand Rapids. February.

. Swanson, Abbie. 2012. "Drought could edge livestock producers out of business." Available at <http://harvestpublicmedia.org/article/1396/drought-could-edge-livestock-producers-out-business/5>. Highlighting program participants Dan and Laura Pugh.

. Farm Talk. 2012. Returning to the Farm program highlighted in this regional weekly newspaper for southern plains <http://farmtalknewspaper.com/areafarmnews/x1241989955/MU-urges-students-to-return-to-the-farm>.

. Cited in MSNBC News. 2012. "With Uncle Sam's help, Americans return to the farm: Call it the 'Green Acres' effect: thousands of families have left suburban cul-de-sacs for the countryside." February 6.

PROGRESS: 2010/09/01 TO 2011/08/31

OUTPUTS: Eight shortcourses were presented during Year 2 with a total of 223 participants. Four workshops, led by Lincoln University, focused on starting in goat production. These workshops were held in all four target areas and attracted 115 participants. High Tunnel Vegetable Production and Installation was held in Springfield (Southwest) with 23 participants; "Getting Started in Organic Farming" in Central region with 48 participants and "Using Cover Crops" with 20 participants; and Berry and Grape production workshop in West Central with 38 participants. Grow Your Farm courses were held in four locations in Year 2 and attracted a total of 121 participants who represented 55 different farm operations. Two courses were held in the East Central Region, with one each in the West Central and Southwest regions. Farmer mentors were present at each of the four courses to facilitate learning. Online Learning and Mentoring Tools: We continued both our Facebook site for Missouri Beginning Farmers and our blog Missouri Beginning Farming (<http://missouribeginningfarming.blogspot.com/>). At the end of year 2, we had 205+ members in Facebook, and 41 blog followers. Since the blog's inception in 2009, there have been a total of 33,493 visitors to the blog, from Missouri, USA and around the world. This averages to 98 visits per day with an average of 411 pages visited per day. In 2009, only 12 blogs were posted, but in 2010, there were 221 and 2011 included 174 before August 31. Blog traffic has increased substantially

nce February 2011. In February 2011 we initiated our Online Learning Community (OLC) to and we have enrolled 208 members to date. It consists of three parts: 1) a monthly webinar series that is recorded and archived viewing; 2) archived materials from all the workshops that have taken place as part of this program; and 3) online forums to discuss particular topics of interest to members. The OLC is hosted through a Moodle site supported by University of Missouri Extension. Beginning farmers can register for the course and have access to all three parts of the OLC, but non members can participate in live webinars. Our webinar series includes a farmer presenting on a particular topic (e.g. Organic Farming, Direct Marketing, Social Media) one week, followed by two weeks of Q and A. Since all webinars are recorded, those farmers who join the OLC at a later date can review all the archived webinars. Viewing archived webinars is also valuable for those with limited internet connections who cannot participate in the live version. We have had approximately 375 participants in 19 webinars in Year two. Revised materials updated in Fall 2010 were used for delivering the course and workshop during the spring 2011 semester (Jan. - May, 2011). In 2011, 12 students completed the course, from many different towns in Missouri. The Returning to the Farm Workshop brought the students family members and other business partners to campus for a day-long event. At the workshop the 29 participants explored a variety of topics related to beginning farmers going back to the family farm presented by several MU Agricultural Economics faculty and University Extension members. PARTICIPANTS: Individuals: *Robert Myers PI helped to plan workshops in the first quarter of Year 2 (Sept - Dec, 2011). He then transitioned to another job outside of Jefferson Institute (JI). *C. Jerry Nelson, new Co-PI, replaced Dr. Myers and helped administer the project from Jefferson Institute, including helping to manage the demonstration fields at JI. *Mary Hendrickson, Co-PI, oversaw the project from the University of Missouri (MU), including convening monthly project meetings and managing the budget. She played a major role in planning and presenting seven workshops, produced two newsletters, initiated the Online Learning Community and assisted with webinar development. Debi Kelly, Senior Personnel, MU coordinated the Grow Your Farm courses, served as liaison with Lincoln University Innovative Small Farm Outreach Program workers and clients, managed social media including Facebook and the blog, and co-planned workshops assuming much of Dr. Myers role in workshop planning. She developed monthly webinars from February through August. *Catherine Bohnert, JI, managed demonstration plots at Jefferson Institute, helped to plan workshops at all locations, presented at workshops. *Lorin Chann, JI, and Sharon Naylor, administrative assistant at University of Missouri, arranged for workshop logistics, ordered resources, designed publications and promotional materials, and managed the Access database. *Ken Schneeberger, MU, provided assistance in planning workshops and arranging GYF speakers, and helped to promote the project within MU and outside. *Kevin Moore, MU, taught Returning to the Farm courses, updated and improved instructional materials used in the course, and is transitioning these materials to formats suitable for extension educators to use in programming with beginning farmers. *Other MU contributors include Bob Broz and Willard Downs who have assisted with developing workshop materials, and are working with the OLC's discussion forum leaders. Our program has a strong linkage with another University of Missouri program, The Entrepreneurship Project (Randy Westgren, PI) because many GYF graduates go on to participate in their programs, while many Entrepreneurship Project participants attend workshops offered by our program. MU Extension regional specialists have been heavily involved in providing workshop presentations and facilitating GYF classes. Lincoln University Innovative Small Farm Outreach program workers have attended many workshops to gain new skills while also bringing clients with them to participate in the programs. Several Lincoln University personnel have presented at workshops or facilitated GYF classes. In addition, Lincoln University was crucial in providing expertise for the goat production workshops. TARGET AUDIENCES: Our target audience falls into several different categories. We generally target beginning farmers who are interested in direct marketing or alternative farming practices, and have oriented our programming in this fashion. Most of our participants come from small or very small farms, and many of them are farming in urban or peri-urban areas. 11% of respondents to our survey consider themselves socially disadvantaged farmers (who has been subjected to racial or ethnic prejudices because of their identity as a member of a group without regard to their individual qualities). About half our participants are women. We use several methods to reach our audience. First, we conduct face-to-face workshops with

xperienced extension and farmer presenters, and include tours of working farms. Workshops are held in four different regions of the state and usually last 1.5 days. Participants are provided with resource materials from credible institutions. Second, we utilize horizontal learning through farmer to farmer sharing in our monthly webinar series. Experience farmers talk through their operations and show how they have developed successful operations and use their experience to answer beginners' questions. These webinars are complimented by resource materials provided through extension. Third, we facilitate a farm planning course GYF that is facilitated in different regions of the state by experienced extension educators. This year we recruited experienced farmers to attend the course and help students understand actual farming problems. Fourth, we use traditional classroom teaching to train farmers who are returning to farm operations. Finally, we are experimenting with social media as a way to encourage networking and learning among farmers from many backgrounds. PROJECT MODIFICATIONS: One major development this year was the addition of the Online Learning Community (OLC). As we detailed in our proposal, we wanted to experiment with online tools that could connect beginning farmers with more experienced farmers; however, in the course of developing our ideas we decided to use a course management website that would allow us to combine knowledge and materials from several different outreach strategies. We now produce monthly webinars that consist of experienced farmers or experts focusing on a particular topic to show the development of production and marketing techniques. Through the interaction on the webinar, beginning farmers are establishing relationships with more experienced farmers. Those beginning farmers who may want to "lurk" in these situations can do that but still gain knowledge from the presentation and the questions that go back and forth. We initiated the OLC as an MU Extension course that offers free enrollment. This way we could collect all our workshop materials and our archived webinars in one place. We are still working to make our blog, Facebook, and OLC more interactive and less one-way transfer of information. In the second half of year two this is beginning to happen more and more.

IMPACT: 2010/09/01 TO 2011/08/31

Change in Knowledge: Of 55 farms in GYF, 41 indicated they would develop farm plans, 26 wrote plans, and additional 4 wrote mission statements. Shortcourse knowledge changes not reported as actions reported below. *In 2011, we surveyed those who had participated in at least one of our programs. 40% (N=51) of participants identified in our database responded to an online survey, while an additional 24 responded based on outreach through blog and Facebook (total =75). Of those responding, 50% had participated in GYF, 57% in workshops, 47% in a monthly webinar and 36% had enrolled in the OLC. *Of the respondents, 77% reported using knowledge gained to take specific actions on their farms: 8% had completed a whole farm plan, 25% a business plan and 15% developed a marketing plan; between 25-30% of respondents had implemented new organic techniques, production techniques or pest management practices; 17% had established a new enterprise on the farm, 17% had built a high-tunnel, and over 30% had grown new crops; nearly 30% had initiated contact with USDA agencies, 20% had applied for NRCS funding, and another 17% had accessed federal or state cost-share. * In addition 55% reported new relationships with more experienced farmers and almost 60% had found new relationships with other beginning farmers. 41% had enrolled in the OLC, using it primarily to access archived materials (88%). 65% reported using our website to access resources. 42% had used the blog and nearly 40% were members of the Facebook site. * In 7 in-depth interviews conducted by our evaluator with GYF participants: 100% had identified new markets; 43% developed a business plan; 57% began direct sales from their farm in the 2011 season (their first commercial sales); 2 installed NRCS high tunnels because of GYF; 2 are planning to install high tunnels with 2012 NRCS funds; 3 (43%) started CSA's after attending GYF; 4 (57%) participated in MU's The Entrepreneurship Project through connections made in GYF. 100% had established new enterprises including: pastured poultry flocks, a CSA, restaurant sales, work enterprise, selling at farmers' markets, fruit production, and a retail local foods grocery. One participant said of GYF: "Four years ago I was in tears. I had no idea what I was doing. The only thing we could do was find other ways of doingThrough your program we have met so many people doing what we do. Now it's not a problem." *From just 1 GYF course 3 participants took the following actions: Jason lost his job and began growing vegetables while trying to buy a

farm. Maude started Maude's Market in St. Louis, a small store front that sells locally grown food. Chris is now farming in the urban area after looking for land for over a year. Brian and Melissa are buying a farm to expand their organic dairy after meeting the FCS representative at the GYF class. *In 4 in-depth interviews evaluator conducted with shortcourse participants: 100% had purchased land after attending workshop, with all 4 in or planning to be in agricultural production by 2012. All had changed their management and production strategies after workshops, with half changing their marketing strategy.

PUBLICATIONS: 2010/09/01 TO 2011/08/31

. You Tube Videos: MU Extension. 2010 Knoll Family who attended the Warrenton Grow Your Farm course discuss what the Grow Your Farm course has done for them. The video can be found at http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bqpogw_jGM.

. MU Extension. 2011. Greg and Nancy Rasmussen, mentors for the Mt Vernon Grow Your Farm course tell about what it means to them to be mentors for the course. The video can be found at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gfh9kTabRsQ>.

. Hendrickson, M. Kelly, D. Bohnert, C. 2011. Missouri Beginning Farmers Program Newsletter. Volume 1, Issue 1. January

. Hendrickson, M. Kelly, D. Bohnert, C. 2011 Missouri Beginning Farmers Program Newsletter. Volume 1, Issue 2. June.

PROGRESS: 2009/09/01 TO 2010/08/31

OUTPUTS: This project has four main components. The first is a multi-week course called "Grow Your Farm" that focuses on skill and resource assessment, business strategy, and financial planning. It includes farm tours and farmers as presenters. In the first year of the project the Grow Your Farm course was offered through University of Missouri Extension at several locations in Missouri, training a total of 98 beginning farmers. The second project component involves "Tier two" workshops that are 1-2 day workshops focused on specific topics. First year offerings of the workshops, in central and southwest Missouri, included 80 total participants and covered the topics "Berry production and marketing," "Growing produce for local markets," "Farm tractors 101," and "Selling directly to consumers." The third component of the project is making an existing University of Missouri agricultural economics course, called "Return to the farm," and developing modules from the course that can be used by other institutions to help farm families plan the return of younger family members to the farm. The fourth component of the project is focused on the use of the internet and social media tools to share information about topics, events, and ideas from other beginning farmers. A comprehensive website targeted to Missouri beginning farmers (but relevant to beginning farmers from across the U.S.) and was launched during 2010 at <http://beginningfarmers.missouri.edu/> A blog to promote training events and share timely information updates was started in November, 2009 at <http://missouribeginningfarming.blogspot.com/> and achieved over 4000 hits in the first year of the project. At the end of the first year, a Facebook page was also set up with beginning farmer information that has been another way of distributing information and linking people. A database of beginning farmers in Missouri is also being created and an evaluator has been hired to work with the project. **PARTICIPANTS:** Project management team: Rob Myers - Jefferson Institute Mary Hendrickson - University of Missouri Debi Kelly - University of Missouri Kevin Moore - University of Missouri Ken Schneeberger - University of Missouri Other participants who helped with the project to date: Sharon Naylor University of Missouri Lorin Chann - Jefferson Institute Catherine Bohnert - Jefferson Institute Patrick Byers - University of Missouri Extension K.B. Paul - Lincoln University **TARGET AUDIENCES:** We are targeting beginning farmers in the east-central, central, west-central, and southwest portions of Missouri. The east-central and west-central areas represent the two urban markets of St. Louis and Kansas City, respectively, while the central and southwest regions have medium-sized cities. We are working with individuals/families who have already begun farming in the last 9 years and also individuals/families who are planning to start farming in the near future. Our audience includes both part-time and full-time farmers. **PROJECT MODIFICATIONS:** Nothing significant to report during this reporting period.

IMPACT: 2009/09/01 TO 2010/08/31

An outside evaluator has begun reviewing the evaluation forms from training events held to date to determine outcomes. At the time of this first year report the determination of outcomes is just getting underway but the one of the first reviews

of outcomes is from a tier two workshop (short course) in Columbia MO titled " Selling Directly to Consumers". Twenty four people were in attendance; five of which were Extension personnel. Participants came from the east central, central and west central regions of Missouri to attend this workshop. Most were couples or individuals in their twenties and thirties looking to start a small farm in the next 2-5 years. A few participants were starting a farmers market in the west central region. Fifteen participants completed the post-event evaluation survey. Seven of the fifteen noted that this was their first time attending a workshop and/or event put on by Extension. All fifteen found the short course useful and would attend again. Participants stated that they would take the following actions: store produce better, create better signs and product labels, collect email addresses from customers, push the sale, and try to form relationships with both buyers and customers. For the project overall, approximately 90% of event attendees have farmed for a few years or less or are preparing to begin farming. The majority already have access to land and most are farming on small acreage. Horticultural enterprises and sheep, goats, and poultry have been primary interests of trainees to date. Participants in the Grow your farm multi-week training course often report changing plans for the enterprises they will focus on and rethinking their marketing approach.

PUBLICATIONS: 2009/09/01 TO 2010/08/31

no publications reported this period