

Final Report

Title:	Massachusetts Beginning Farmer Agricultural Alliance		
Sponsoring Agency	NIFA	Project Status	COMPLETE
Funding Source	Non Formula	Reporting Frequency	Final
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Reporting Period Start Date	09/01/2010	Reporting Period End Date	08/31/2013
Submitted By	Marie Anne Faissler	Date Submitted to NIFA	12/02/2013

Program Code: BFRDP**Program Name:** Beginning Farmer and Rancher**Project Director**

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Recipient Organization

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Performing Department

New Entry Sustainable Farming

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{NO DATA ENTERED}

Departments

{NO DATA ENTERED}

Non-Technical Summary

Tufts University proposes a 3-year USDA Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program (BFRDP) Standard Project grant incorporating several USDA defined program priorities. Our target audience for this grant is beginning farmers across Massachusetts; an estimated 40% of whom are socially disadvantaged and limited resource producers. As traditional farm education providers have reduced their capacity to serve small farmers, a majority of new producers learn agricultural skills and obtain technical assistance through alternative venues - incubator programs, internships, conferences, and self-directed efforts. Our goal for this 3-year BFRDP project (2010-2013) is to launch a Massachusetts Beginning Farmer Agricultural Alliance (BFAA) as a statewide collaboration of farmers and 40+ farm service providers to promote and coordinate education, training and technical assistance opportunities for hundreds of beginning farmers. Through BFAA, partners will systematically refer producers to resources throughout the network, and aggregate T&TA resources online for common access. Two other BFAA-funded initiatives will include: expanding farmland access statewide and developing a livestock training / education and outreach project. As part of the BFAA, we will spearhead a BFAA farmland matching partnership - a statewide collaboration of organizations and farmers involved with farmland preservation, access, and protection in order to (a) better coordinate the work being done by multiple entities in this arena; (b) consolidate and integrate information about available farmland in Massachusetts; (c) broaden outreach to landowners and land-seekers in order to expand access to farmland by beginning farmers; and (d) expand land preservation and active farmland utilization. Activities will include expanding farmland outreach and building our farmland database; improving and expanding an online farmland map and interactive search; linking farmers to farmland; and organizing workshops for partnering organizations; and providing technical assistance to land-seekers for farmland assessment, tenure arrangements, and infrastructure financing. We will also collaborate with multiple partner agencies to develop a comprehensive pasture-based livestock outreach and education program to serve Massachusetts farmers. The livestock project goal is to enable hundreds of farmers across the Commonwealth to begin raising livestock (poultry, sheep, goats, swine, beef cattle, and other species) in order to diversify their farms, to farm more sustainably, to increase farming incomes, and to meet community demands for fresh, locally-raised meats. An important priority is address the increasing legal and regulatory issues around producing and selling livestock / meat and to raise awareness and broaden access to several USDA programs and services by the participating farmers in order to enhance the success of their diversified farm enterprises.

Accomplishments

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Major goals of the project

Major BFRDP outcomes are: 1. BFAA: Over 2,500 beginning farmers, 40% socially disadvantaged, will participate in BFAA partner outreach, training and technical assistance programs and services between 2010-2013. At least 1,500 farmers will access online education tools, event information, and resource guides. 2. Farmland: At least 200 underserved beginning farmers in Massachusetts will use the Land Identification resources, and at least 75 will formalize arrangements to buy or lease farmland. 3. Livestock: At least 300 beginning farmers will participate in livestock field schools and receive technical assistance for livestock production, permitting, processing and marketing.

What was accomplished under these goals?

For BFN, over 225 people in MA participated in focus groups, the retreat and working groups, or the networking forum on 11/12/13. Evaluations from this Forum showed farmers and service providers' knowledge increased with regard to all the services offered to farmers in MA and networking increased the ability to achieve their personal and professional goals in agriculture. Over 600 people visited the www.bfnmass.org website each month by August 2013. Over 300 people receive the quarterly newsletters and updates. Over 100 service providers in Mass are registered users on the bfnmass.org website, posting resources, events, and receiving updates. The website contains a database of several hundred individual resources and an average of over 20 farmer events in Mass are posted each month. Nearly 200 farmers and farm service providers attended BFN local networking events in 2013. 256 people "like" the BFN/Mass Facebook page. On 7/9/13, New Entry hosted a meeting with MA Agriculture Commissioner Greg Watson to meet New Entry farmers, and learn about initiatives of the BFN. A change in condition occurred when it was determined during the meeting that MDAR would appoint a liaison in their office to field questions and help make connections for beginning farmers through the referral network.

New Entry's Livestock Field Schools are the primary livestock trainings in Eastern and Central MA; small-scale poultry producers and others from across the state and across the country contact New Entry on a weekly basis for TA regarding on-farm poultry processing, accounting for over 100 hours of one-on-one TA and consulting in 2013 alone; and we have become, in essence, the de facto alternative livestock extension agents for Eastern MA (and perhaps all of MA). The annual series of Livestock Field Schools completed each year of the grant, accounts for a total of 31 workshops and 684 attendees (over 400 unique participants). Staff provided over 1,200 hours of one-on-one technical assistance to livestock farmers over the 3 years. With New Entry's guidance and training, at least 12 producers completed their training requirements to obtain a MA poultry slaughter license in 2012.

Based on workshop evaluations, follow-up surveys, and personal interactions, livestock participants showed significant changes in knowledge, action, and in some cases, condition. Evaluations from all 31 workshops showed significant increases in participant knowledge. Participants of all experience levels were exposed to new concepts and learned new skills and strategies. Of the specific knowledge increases cited by participants, most related to livestock production, marketing, regulations, risk management, and available resources.

Major themes for action changes included: beginning a new livestock enterprise, or scaling up from hobby to business; increasing use of pasture in place of drylots and stored forage; improving preventive veterinary and health practices, including farm biosecurity; sourcing new breeds of livestock; seeking new poultry processing resources; accessing new markets and implementing new marketing strategies; recognizing and improving product quality; working more effectively with regulators; connecting to new resources and service providers, including NRCS and FSA; investing in farm infrastructure, testing hay for nutritional quality; and adjusting profitability expectations for certain livestock enterprises.

Major themes for condition changes included: transitioning from "backyarder" to "farmer;" improved quality of life due to labor-saving measures; new community leadership roles and status; improved farm profitability due to new marketing strategies, market access, cost-cutting measures, and production efficiencies; and new farmer-to-farmer and farm service provider networks established around profitable alternative livestock production.

For farmland match, our work with new and beginning farmers through technical assistance and the newenglandfarmlandfinder.org website has allowed more new and beginning farmers to gain access to land and also to act more independently in obtaining farmland access.

Our work with Ag Commissions has educated the older generation of farmers about the realities facing young and beginning farmers. We have found that the older generation was often unaware that young people were looking to get into agriculture and desperately seeking land. Additionally, although local farmers often know where the active farmland is, they were often unaware that there were other farmland opportunities in their towns (identified through our GIS mapping projects). With the knowledge that they acquired through our outreach, ag. commissions and the established ag. communities have pursued new farmland opportunities and (for the most part) welcomed young and beginning farmers into their towns.

Our work through the Farm Friendly Neighbor (FFN) program has shown an acceptance, on the part of municipal officials, that some farmers face issues dealing with complaints from neighbors and municipal boards. For the most part municipal officials we talked with are hopeful that there is a way to remedy these issues and to make their town more "farm friendly". FFN should first bring about a change in the public's understanding of farming practices and why farmers need to use certain techniques, and also a change in the way the public supports their local farmers. Additionally, FFN should bring about a lasting change in

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the way each "Farm Friendly" municipality deals with public health, zoning, environmental, and other issues that arise on local farms. With a better understanding of ag. practices and the importance of local ag., these municipalities will be empowered to change their local policies, by-laws, and regulations, to support and not hinder agriculture where possible.

In 2011, of the 34 farmers participating in our farmland matching services, we were able to assist 7 farmers in securing long- and short-term leases on new farmland. We also assisted over 13 landowners to list their properties with our land match program, thus clarifying the goals and outcomes they have for their land. We also developed solid partnerships in the town of Groton through an in-depth GIS study of available farmland and a 200+ piece landowner mailing which resulted in over 39 people registered to attend an informational meeting to learn more about the mechanics of making their land available to new farmers.

For 2012, of the 34 farmland seekers, we assisted 6 in securing leases on new farmland. We assisted 15 landowners to list properties for lease, thus clarifying the goals and outcomes for their land. Our partnership with Groton Agricultural Commission (GIS study) from 2011 generated inquiries from 6 landowners interested in leasing land. We assessed their goals and land and 2 moved forward and were matched with 2 different farmers. We also partnered with the towns of Concord and Topsfield. In Concord, a mailing to 200+ property owners resulted in 30 people attending a workshop on leasing land to farmers. Two landowners followed up. In Topsfield, we assisted the Ag Commission in inventorying farmland with a participatory Google Earth process and mailed 60+ landowners. 25 people attended an informational meeting and 2 landowners expressed interest in leasing land. Also, we established relationships with (Dartmouth and Westport) to map their farmland and reach landowners.

For 2013, 6 New Entry farmers were matched with land. Also, staff arranged for development of a third incubator farm site in Newburyport MA where 3 New Entry farmers were placed..

What opportunities for training and professional development has the project provided?

We attended conferences to increase knowledge and develop connections to better serve MA beginning farmers: New England Food Summit, Young Farmers Conference, Northeast Organic Food Association, Northeast Beginning Farmer Network Meeting, Whole Measures Conference, Start-2-Farm Conference, Northeast Sustainable Agriculture Working Group Conference, Cornell Beginning Farmer Network Meeting, Yale Food Systems Symposium (presented on Beginning Farmers), MA Green Careers Conference (presented on Ag.job Opportunities), Beginning Farmer Learning Network (train-the-trainer conference). Staff served as informal mentor to the coordinator of the Pioneer Valley Grows Network.

In December 2010, we coordinated a regional "Farmer-to-Farmer" conference, with 120 attendees. In this precursor to the BFN, 12 farmers presented on best practices and lessons learned. The first BFN stakeholder retreat hosted 50 participants in 2011, including beginning farmers and service providers. Working groups developed with over 30 participants to address farmer development, website development, outreach, referral networks, and a steering committee. A 2nd statewide meeting was held in May 2012 to share BFN accomplishments. On 11/13/2012, the first BFN Fall Networking Forum was held with over 60 attendees, with website launch, small round-table discussions, and formation of new working groups.

In 2013, the BFN coordinated a Service Provider Meeting with 14 attendees to identify gaps in programming in MA; hosted a meeting with the MA Ag Commissioner to discuss MDAR's potential collaborative role; coordinated a Steering Committee Retreat for 16 members; organized the 2nd annual Fall Forum with 95 attendees (11 sponsors), including networking activities, discussion break outs, a working lunch, and farm service provider pitches.

The BFN provided professional development to Tufts AFE graduate students through their Community Food Planning and Programs course. Also, 1 student assisted in the outreach and content development for the BFN program and website through a Directed Study project. BFN hired a summer intern who received training in network organizing and the online www.bfnmass.org website platform.

For Farmland, we connected to landowners, land trusts, conservation commissions, town agencies, and partners to expand our knowledge of available farmland. We piloted a program conducting an intensive town-based GIS study to identify available farmland in coordination with USDA's NRCS. We partnered with the Metro Area Planning Council, to pilot a Farm Friendly Neighbor Campaign (FFN) to increase understanding of the benefits of local agriculture and of common farming practices, expand community support for agriculture and empower residents to actively support agriculture in their town. Our Farmland program offered internships to students and young professionals. Four Tufts Graduate students and one volunteer worked with staff on the FFN program, brochure creation, website content development, general outreach, and a Plain Language Guide to Farming Multiple Plots (currently being finalized).

In addition, staff presented on our Farmland program to the following groups in 2011: Regional Ag. Commission meeting in Pioneer Valley; National ORR/RAPP Conference; NOFA Winter Conference; Littleton Parks and Rec; Trust for Public Land; Concord Ag Committee; Littleton Ag Commission; Pepperell Ag Committee; DEP in Worcester; Freedom's Way.

The following Farmland professional development activities took place in 2012 and 2013: attended a state-wide meeting to assess priorities for farmland preservation with 20 land trusts and ag. nonprofits - we aided 2 towns to map farmland and hold landowner education workshops on leasing land; presented a webinar on our Farmland Matching Service to the national Environmental Leadership Program; presented a workshop at the MA Land Conservation Conference; attended the Middlesex

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Conservation District hearing to educate attendees about the our GIS project; conducted a statewide farmland meeting in Leominster, with 22 partner organizations; met with the Lincoln Ag Commission to describe the GIS outreach program; Co-sponsored and conducted outreach at the MA Audubon workshop on the Future of Farmland; presented to the Wilbraham Ag. Commission on the GIS and town agricultural lands inventory work; participated in a regional Steering Committee call for a Farmland Professional Development working group; conducted a Farmland leasing Workshop in Groton (50 attendees); conducted a Hamden County Farmland Workshop (6 attendees); participated in the Lincoln Ag Commission yearly "Future of Farming in Lincoln" meeting, focusing on their mapping project, which we helped facilitate.

In the course of this grant, staff provided a total of over 1,200 hours of one-on-one technical assistance to livestock farmers and conducted 31 events, with 684 registrants to increase producer knowledge, as follows:

Livestock Farm Day – free event w/ concurrent workshops (2011: 71 students; 2012: 60 students; 2013: 40 students). Poultry Processing Trainings –2 each year: Regulations and Logistics Workshop, Hands-on Food Safety Training (2011: 46 students; 2012: 62 students; 2013: 22 students). Poultry Workshops (2011, Poultry Workshop Series [7 events]: 83 students; 2012, Pastured Poultry Farm Tour: 38; 2013: Pasture-Raised Poultry Clinics [2 events]: 38. Swine School (2011: 18 students; 2013, Feeder-to-Finish Pigs: 22 students). Sheep and Goat Workshops (2011, Sheep and Goat School: 20; 2012, Sheep School + Internal Parasite Management [2 events]: 39; 2013: Sheep School: 40 students). Beef Cattle Workshops (2012, Cattle Behavior and Handling with Dr. Temple Grandin: 26 participants; Pasture Walk on Grass-fed Cattle Farm: 6 students). Regulations and Marketing (2011, Regulations for Small Livestock Farmers: 6 students; 2013, Meat Marketing Workshop: 27 students). Other Pasture and Feeds Workshop (2012, Livestock Feeds and Nutrition: 22 students; 2013, Pasture Planting Workshop: 12 students). Other Animal Workshops (2011, Meat Rabbit Workshop: 8 students)

We also designed and taught a Livestock Enterprise and Production Planning session for our Farm Business Planning Course, (a total of 6 sessions and 32 students). We participated in a multi-year SARE Professional Development Grant for Applied Poultry Science Training (2010-13). This not only improved staff capacity to deliver TA, but also helped to build a community of practice for New England farm service providers who work with poultry farms. We mentored several poultry producer-processors in their 1st year using an MPPU. We also connected beginning livestock producers with established operations and with farm service providers for mentorship.

Additional livestock professional development activities were as follows: led 2 tours of Pete and Jen's Backyard Birds and our MPPU for Tufts students (33 total); presented on Livestock Production systems to Tufts students (4 presentations); attended the MA Poultry Enhancement Council annual meeting to speak and field questions regarding the MPPU; participated in the New England Meat Conference planning summit and met with partner organizations from across New England; attended the MA IPM Working Group to discuss weather monitoring and invasive pests; attended a statewide meeting hosted by the Farm Bureau to introduce the new Ag Commissioner to the issues of meat production, slaughter and processing in MA and the intersection of MA Dept. of Ag. and DPH in the regulatory role (22 producers); participated in the New England Regional Meat Conference planning committee and helped select candidates for conference coordinator; led an intensive workshop at the NOFA/Mass Winter Conference; keynote speaker at the Rhode Island Sheep Cooperative's Annual Conference (42 producers) -focused on strategies for increasing flock productivity and managing out-of-season breeding.

How have the results been disseminated to communities of interest?

We share our program resources and strategies with local, regional, and national partners, via both direct (face-to-face) meetings and remotely via the internet. We have found that direct communications with our partners and constituents is critical in conveying results of our work under the objectives in this grant. See "Opportunities for Professional Development" above, which provides specifics regarding our direct engagement with communities of interest. Also, as a result of this grant support, multiple resources were developed for on-line use, broadening our impact in communities of interest. All resources, including our farmland matching program, livestock resources, plain language resource guides, and more are available on our website: www.nesfp.org. In addition, copies of resource guides, marketing brochures, and farm employment directories are regularly distributed through local and regional partner organizations. Our bi-monthly newsletter, including information on BFN, Farmland Match, and Livestock activities is currently distributed to over 5,000 individuals.

For BFN, outreach toolkits were created and sent to each of the 10 service provider steering committee members for the BFN. Toolkits included instructions, pens, buttons, flyers, and other promotional materials. A BFN/Mass banner was designed and printed for displays at conferences and other events. The coordinator presented at several conferences and college classrooms on BFN. All steering committee members and partner organizations were asked to do outreach for the 2013 BFN Fall Forum. The BFN/Mass Facebook page has 256 likes and is increasingly used to direct people to the site and interact with followers.

For Farmland outreach, the critical issue being conveyed is that new and beginning farmers need more land in our region, and that there is not enough affordable land available at the current time. This message is conveyed through outreach to agricultural commissions, who often aren't aware that there are new and beginning farmers looking for land, and outreach to land trusts, who have conservation land and want to conserve more agricultural land, but do not realize that there is a whole contingent of farmers who are desperately trying to get access to affordable land. Direct outreach, meetings, phone calls, etc. has been successful with these groups and it will continue.

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Additionally, the Farm Friendly Neighbor (FFN) program is designed to educate municipalities and the general public on how they can support local agriculture and farmers. Many farmers are faced with adversity in their communities which affects their businesses and their quality of life. In order to keep farms viable and create more "farm friendly" towns, outreach to the general public and municipalities is ongoing. New Entry is currently in the process, through its Farm Friendly Neighbor program, of partnering with municipalities throughout MA on brochure creation. New Entry has created the FFN brochure, but has allowed room for each town to insert its own Agricultural Commission or local agriculture information into that town's brochure. These brochures will be a way to educate the public about ways to support local agriculture, the services that New Entry offers to the agricultural community, and the local agricultural commission or local agricultural community. For livestock dissemination, announcements were sent to various farmer-oriented listservs, publications, and organizations (e.g. EMassCRAFT, GLCI Gazette). Underserved/socially disadvantaged beginning farmers participating in New Entry's core programs were an important community of interest, including many new and prospective farmers who may not otherwise have known about livestock educational opportunities. We also made targeted connections with immigrant and refugee communities, including through organizations such as Lutheran Social Services, International Institute of New Hampshire, and Nuestras Raices.

Also, we have been successful in working with the media to gain exposure both to important issues, as well as New Entry programs being offered. Articles were published as follows; an article appeared in the 3/4/2011 on-line publication "Tufts Now" highlighting New Entry's livestock programming series. The journalist attended New Entry's Sheep training and obtained perspectives of farmers and instructors. An article appeared in the May 2011 NOFA Mass Newsletter highlighting the upcoming MPPU unit, sponsored by New Entry. The article was written by the New Entry Livestock Coordinator. New Entry's poultry processing work was covered very favorably in a Radio Boston story on WBUR in October 2011. The reporter attended the Aug. 22 poultry processing workshop and the story was specifically dedicated to New Entry's work. An article appeared in the on-line Nashoba Valley News of 7/22/11, highlighting the new land match activity initiated by New Entry in the town of Groton. The New Entry Mobile Poultry Processing initiative was featured in an article written on the Community Poultry Processing Day in December 2011 Country Folks. The article covers the history of the MPPU and indicates how farmers should prepare if they plan to lease the unit.

The MPPU was highlighted as a case study in USDA's Know Your Farmer Know Your Food Compass publication. In February 2012, New Entry's MPPU program was featured in an article in Small Farm Quarterly.

New Entry's Sheep School in June 2012 was featured in two Country Folks articles in July and August.

An essay written by New Entry Livestock Program Coordinator Sam Anderson, "Moral Clarity through Chicken-Killing," was published in Greenhorns: 50 Dispatches from the New Farmers' Movement (Storey Publishing, 2012). The essay centered on New Entry's work with small-scale poultry farmers. The Farmland Match Program was featured in the Spring 2012 Edible Boston edition. The article highlights the way that New Entry is using GIS technology, combined with face-to-face education at town meetings in order to locate available farm land and willing land owners. This was great exposure for New Entry, since this publication is popular among "foodies" throughout the greater Boston area. An article on land matching and working with the Topsfield Agricultural Commission was published in the Tri Town Transcript on June 22, 2012.

On 1/24/13, an article appeared in the Boston Globe profiling the GIS-based system for farmland search, the interactions that New Entry established with the Groton community and New Entry farmer Seona's relationship with land owner Susan Shay. A Boston Globe Article was published on 7/23/13 which featured beginning farmer network gatherings and BFN/Mass Coordinator, Margiana Petersen-Rockney: On 11/9/13, an article appeared in the Worcester Telegram and Gazette regarding the formation of BFN/Mass and the upcoming Fall Forum. On 10/16/13, a press release was printed in the TriTown Transcript regarding New Entry's upcoming Landowner Workshop to take place in Topsfield MA on 10/22/13. On 11/2/13, an article was printed in the Tri-town Transcript about the landowner workshop that was held. The article profiled a New Entry farmer (originally from Cambodia) and the land owner. The article also provided information regarding how to lease land.

On 11/5/13, an event was held in the Town of Lincoln to educate landowners on leasing land to farmers. The event was also advertised to farmers as a way to learn what New Entry's Farmland Matching Service can offer and to network with landowners who may have land to lease. The event attracted 40 attendees, 1/4 of which were farmers. Flyers for the event were posted in business and town facilities throughout the Town of Lincoln but also sent out to New Entry's contact lists and other farmers list-serves such as EMass Craft and NOFA-MA.

What do you plan to do during the next reporting period to accomplish the goals?

{Nothing to report}

Participants

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Actual FTE's for this Reporting Period

Role	Non-Students or faculty	Students with Staffing Roles			Computed Total by Role
		Undergraduate	Graduate	Post-Doctorate	
Scientist	1.3	0	0	0	1.3
Professional	3	0	0	0	3
Technical	0.58	0	0.3	0	0.8799999999999999
Administrative	0.5	0	0	0	0.5
Other	0	0	0	0	0
Computed Total	5.38	0	0.3	0	5.6799999999999999

Student Count by Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP) Code

{NO DATA ENTERED}

Target Audience

New Entry participants are from all over the world, and include socially disadvantaged, underserved, and limited resource producers. New Entry participants are primarily aspiring and prospective farmers, start-up and beginning farmers, and establishing farmers. Aspiring or prospective farmers are generally exploring opportunities in the agricultural sector and participate in various levels of New Entry training programs and workshops; some wish to receive on-the-job training prior to beginning their own farm enterprises so they are connected to farm internships, apprenticeships, or on farm job opportunities. New Entry's prospective farmers have an interest in establishing their own farm enterprises and generally have prior farming experience. New Entry start-up farmers have 3-4 years of farm experience and receive substantial assistance from New Entry and/or other service providers. New Entry's established farmers have 4-10 years of farm operations experience, and are getting established as independent producers. They continue to receive training and other technical assistance from New Entry and other Massachusetts farm service providers. During the grant period, New Entry participants were from Argentina, Cambodia, Cameroon, Canada, Columbia, Germany, Haiti, Iran, Liberia, Mexico, Puerto Rico, Somalia, Turkey, Vietnam, Zimbabwe and the USA. During the grant period, approximately 50% of participants were economically disadvantaged; 52% of participants were women and 38% were immigrants. All land match farmers who we assisted over the 3 years of this grant came from this pool of farmers.

We worked with over 400 unique livestock participants providing focused one-on-one technical assistance and/or topical workshop trainings. Over 65% of participants fit into USDA's definition of Socially Disadvantaged Farmers and Ranchers (SDFR). Over 50% of participants were women. Over 15% of all participants came from out of state, including Connecticut, Rhode Island, New Hampshire, Maine, Vermont and New York. Over 80% of participants had fewer than 3 years of experience running a livestock enterprise.

Over 75% of participants met the USDA definition of Beginning Farmers and Ranchers. Of the remaining participants, nearly all either raised a few animals and had an interest in scaling up, or lacked the means to raise animals but were interested in starting a livestock enterprise in the future.

Farmers and service providers who participate in the Beginning Farmer Network of Massachusetts (BFN) are a slightly different audience. At the 2012 and 2013 networking forums, a majority of the farmers involved had been farming 1-3 years, with lesser participation from people with greater farming experience.

Products

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Type	Status	Year Published	NIFA Support Acknowledged
Websites	Published	2013	YES

Citation

"New England Farmland Finder" - A website, was created in 2013 through another BFRDP-funded Land Access Project (Land for Good), though New Entry played a leading/subcontracted role to assist in the development and management of the website: www.newenglandfarmlandfinder.org

A consortium of organizations in New England worked as a task force to assess the strengths and gaps regarding farmland access in our region. The consortium developed the website in order to consolidate and strengthen farmland matching and linking efforts throughout New England. The website allows farmers and landowners to independently post and search farmland opportunities throughout New England.

Type	Status	Year Published	NIFA Support Acknowledged
Websites	Published	2012	YES

Citation

A website created in 2012, www.bfnmass.org includes successful farmer profiles, blog posts for service providers and farmers, and a resource map allowing farmers to search for education, financial help, farm suppliers, and more.

Other Products**Product Type**

Other

Description

"Farmland Access for New Farmers", A method briefing of New Entry's farmland matching program, which helps connect farmers who get started on the incubator sites with available farmland in Eastern Massachusetts. Document includes program history, staffing, resources, and key activities. Available on-line (PDF, 4 pages) 2012:

http://nesfp.org/sites/default/files/resources/farmland_access_for_new_farmers.pdf

Product Type

Other

Description

"Livestock Training for New Farmers" - A method briefing of New Entry's livestock training program, designed for beginning farmers—particularly those with limited resources—who wish to start or scale up a small pasture-based livestock or poultry enterprise. (4 pages, PDF) 2012:

http://nesfp.org/sites/default/files/resources/livestock_training_for_new_farmers.pdf

Product Type

Data and Research Material

Description

"New England Small Ruminant IPM Survey." Farmer survey and subsequent report, investigating integrated pest management challenges for sheep and goat farmers, particularly the gastrointestinal parasite *H. contortus*; and sheep and goat farmers' knowledge and adoption of IPM practices in response to these challenges. Project of the New England Small Ruminant IPM Working Group, (with support from Northeastern IPM Center) created and housed by New Entry Sustainable Farming Project. Report by Sam Anderson. Survey distributed to farmers in 2011 and 2012; Report completed 2012.

<http://nesfp.nutrition.tufts.edu/resources/summary-results-new-england-small-ruminant-producer-survey>

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Product Type

Educational Aids or Curricula

Description

"Livestock Enterprises: An Overview." Classroom lesson and PowerPoint presentation. Part 1 of the Livestock Module in New Entry's Farm Business Planning Course. Created 2011 (Revised 2013).

Product Type

Educational Aids or Curricula

Description

"Livestock Production Planning." Classroom lesson and PowerPoint presentation. Part 2 of the Livestock Module in New Entry's Farm Business Planning Course. Created 2011 (Revised 2013).

Product Type

Educational Aids or Curricula

Description

"Farm Support Services", Annotated list of resources compiled by the New Entry Sustainable Farm Project to assist incubator farm operations. Includes government programs, private companies, NGOs, grassroots groups, and consultants. (PDF 2 pages). Created 2012. <http://nesfp.org/resources/farm-support-services>

Product Type

Other

Description

"Farm Support Services", Annotated list of resources compiled by the New Entry Sustainable Farm Project to assist incubator farm operations. Includes government programs, private companies, NGOs, grassroots groups, and consultants. (PDF 2 pages). Created 2012. <http://nesfp.org/resources/farm-support-services>

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Product Type

Other

Description

For the Farmland initiative, we piloted a program conducting an intensive town-based GIS study to identify available farmland in coordination with USDA's NRCS. We partnered with the Metro Area Planning Council, to pilot a Farm Friendly Neighbor Campaign (FFN) to increase understanding of the benefits of local agriculture and of common farming practices, expand community support for agriculture and empower residents to

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actively support agriculture in their town.

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We took part in the following community meetings/conferences in 2012 and 2013: attended a state-wide meeting to assess priorities for farmland preservation with 20 land trusts and ag. nonprofits - we aided 2 towns to map farmland and hold landowner education workshops on leasing land; presented a webinar on our Farmland Matching Service to the national Environmental Leadership Program; presented a workshop at the MA Land Conservation Conference; attended the Middlesex Conservation District hearing to educate attendees about the our GIS project; conducted a statewide farmland meeting in Leominster, with 22 partner organizations; met with the Lincoln Ag Commission to describe the GIS outreach program; Co-sponsored and conducted outreach at the MA Audubon workshop on the Future of Farmland; presented to the Wilbraham Ag. Commission on the GIS and town agricultural lands inventory work; participated in a regional Steering Committee call for a Farmland Professional Development working group; conducted a Farmland leasing Workshop in Groton (50 attendees); conducted a Hamden County Farmland Workshop (6 attendees); participated in the Lincoln Ag Commission yearly "Future of Farming in Lincoln" meeting, focusing on their mapping project, which we helped facilitate.

Product Type

Other

Description

For our Livestock initiative, staff provided a total of over 1,200 hours of one-on-one technical assistance to livestock farmers and conducted 31 events, with 684 registrants to increase producer knowledge, as follows: Livestock Farm Day – free event w/ concurrent workshops (2011: 71 students; 2012: 60 students; 2013: 40 students). Poultry Processing Trainings –2 each year: Regulations and Logistics Workshop, Hands-on Food Safety Training (2011: 46 students; 2012: 62 students; 2013: 22 students). Poultry Workshops (2011, Poultry Workshop Series [7 events]: 83 students; 2012, Pastured Poultry Farm Tour: 38; 2013: Pasture-Raised Poultry Clinics [2 events]: 38. Swine School (2011: 18 students; 2013, Feeder-to-Finish Pigs: 22 students). Sheep and Goat Workshops (2011, Sheep and Goat School: 20; 2012, Sheep School + Internal Parasite Management [2 events]: 39; 2013: Sheep School: 40 students). Beef Cattle Workshops (2012, Cattle Behavior and Handling with Dr. Temple Grandin: 26 participants; Pasture Walk on Grass-fed Cattle Farm: 6 students). Regulations and Marketing (2011, Regulations for Small Livestock Farmers: 6 students; 2013, Meat Marketing Workshop: 27 students). Other Pasture and Feeds Workshop (2012, Livestock Feeds and Nutrition: 22 students; 2013, Pasture Planting Workshop: 12 students). Other Animal Workshops (2011, Meat Rabbit Workshop: 8 students).

Product Type

Other

Description

For our Livestock initiative, we designed and taught a Livestock Enterprise and Production Planning session for our Farm Business Planning Course, (a total of 6 sessions and 32 students). We participated in a multi-year SARE Professional Development Grant for Applied Poultry Science Training (2010-13). This not only improved staff capacity to deliver TA, but also helped to build a community of practice for New England farm service providers who work with poultry farms. We mentored several poultry producer-processors in their 1st year using an MPPU. We also connected beginning livestock producers with established operations and with farm service providers for mentorship.

Accession No. 223526

Project No. MASV-DAG303

Product Type

Other

Description

For our Livestock initiative, we participated in the following conferences/community meetings: led 2 tours of Pete and Jen's Backyard Birds and the our MPPU for Tufts students (33 total); presented on Livestock Production systems to Tufts students (4 presentations); attended the MA Poultry Enhancement Council annual meeting to speak and field questions regarding the MPPU; participated in the New England Meat Conference planning summit and met with partner organizations from across New England; attended the MA IPM Working Group to discuss weather monitoring and invasive pests; attended a statewide meeting hosted by the Farm Bureau to introduce the new Ag Commissioner to the issues of meat production, slaughter and processing in MA and the intersection of MA Dept. of Ag. and DPH in the regulatory role, with 22 producers; participated in the New England Regional Meat Conference planning committee and helped select candidates for conference coordinator; led an intensive workshop at the NOFA/Mass Winter Conference; keynote speaker at the Rhode Island Sheep Cooperative's Annual Conference, with 42 producers -focused on strategies for increasing flock productivity and managing out-of-season breeding.

Changes/Problems

Although we initially intended to carry out a set series of species-specific Livestock Field Schools (Swine School, Poultry School, Beef Cattle School etc.), it became clear through participant and speaker feedback that this approach has certain limits, particularly in that it tends to require a "breadth-over-depth" approach. This is useful for beginners, but few repeat participants when the same event is held the following year. We have continued to hold some species-specific workshops, focusing on enterprises that our surveys (sent at year's end to all Livestock Field School participants, as well as to our larger livestock e-list with over 1,000 subscribers), such as the Sheep School and Pasture-Raised Poultry Clinics in 2013.

However, we have also covered certain topics in more depth, including topics relevant to multiple species/enterprises (e.g. Meat Marketing, Livestock Feeds and Nutrition) and species-specific topics of particular importance (e.g. Internal Parasite Management for Small Ruminants, Cattle Behavior and Handling). This allows us to continue serving beginning and prospective livestock farmers at the "100 level" as well as past years' participants and others at the "200 level," where there has been a particularly glaring need for continuing education and resources in Massachusetts.

One of our proposed projects for the Beginning Farmer Network was to develop a farmer-based self assessment and skills/knowledge competency tool called "Learning Ladders." The goal was to develop a cohort of beginning farmers who would commit to a multi-year, structured learning process whereby they would identify needed agricultural skills and competencies and they would work with a set of service providers to build those skills and competencies via individual learning plans and access resources and services. The initial working group was spearheaded by an academic who developed a workplan to pursue the project, but the scope of work resulted in requiring more staffing than was possible to support under the auspices of the BFRDP grant. Additional funding proposals were submitted to NECRME and RMA, but were not successfully funded, so the project stalled. To compensate for not being able to develop a formal learning ladders program with appropriate staffing, a graduate student at Tufts completed her directed study developing a "Passport to Agricultural Skills and Competencies." This Passport project serves as a self-guided skills and competency workbook that can be used by a beginning farmer to track their learning plan over a range of more than 20 different agricultural skills topics. The Passport can be used alone as a self-guided tool for learning, or it could be used in the context of an apprenticeship or mentorship with a farm mentor. The guide will be posted to the New Entry website in early December 2014 and if future funding is secured, we would like to develop a smartphone "app" for farmers to track their Passport accomplishments in an online/phone-based platform.

And additional project that has been delayed is development of the Beginning Farmer Resource Guide: What Every Agripreneur Needs to Know about Doing Business in Massachusetts. This resource guide was modeled on a similar guide to Farming in New York State and a similar Legal Guide to Farming in Vermont. A list of over three dozen fact sheet topics was compiled and each topic was researched for current policies, regulations, and guidance. The delay stemmed from needing to circulate the Resource Guide to federal, state, and local agency personnel to review and fact check the guides. We anticipate the guide will be available to post online to our website by January 2014.