

Final Report

Title:	South Dakota Beginning Farmer Training, Mentoring, Networking, and Marketing Support Project		
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Program Code: BFRDP**Program Name:** Beginning Farmer and Rancher**Project Director**

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Recipient Organization

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{NO DATA ENTERED}

Co-Project Directors

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{NO DATA ENTERED}

Non-Technical Summary

The South Dakota Beginning Farmer Training, Mentoring, Networking, and Market Support Project is needed to support the success of a new generation of sustainable beginning farmers. This project's target audience is beginning and aspiring farmers and ranchers who are interested in sustainable farming and small-scale, high-value food production for local markets. The number of young farmers in conventional agriculture has been shrinking for decades, as technology replaces human perception, as profit margins shrink, and as the cost to capitalize continues to grow. In South Dakota, the number of young farmers (under the age of 25, as primary operators) fell from 726 in 1997 to 242 in 2007 (Aberdeen American News 7.08.09). Even as we lose young people from the field of conventional agriculture, however, opportunities continue to grow in sustainable agriculture and local foods production and marketing. This project meets the needs of the next generation of beginning farmers in SD, including: training in whole farm planning and management; mentoring focused on sustainable farming methods; networks leading to opportunities for partnerships, land, and equipment; and marketing support. The long term goals of the project is to increase the number of successful beginning farmers and ranchers in South Dakota engaged in sustainable, profitable farming operations; to increase the availability of locally grown foods and the market share of locally grown foods in South Dakota, and to enhance food security in South Dakota. The SD Beginning Farmer Training, Mentoring, Networking, and Market Support project will:

- Train up to 40 beginning farm families in whole farm planning, business management, value added marketing, and sustainable production methods
- Increase early success and retention of beginning farmers and ranchers by facilitating mentor relationships between 40 SD Farm Beginnings participants and "seasoned" farmers and ranchers with relevant experience
- Increase success and retention of sixty beginning farm families by connecting them to South Dakota-based opportunities for farmland, equipment, and experience transfer in the DRA Farmer Network
- Increase marketing success of one hundred South Dakota beginning farmers by providing market support through the South Dakota Local Foods Directory, and a new on-line local foods buying cooperative in eastern South Dakota
- Increase the knowledge and skills of up to 100 beginning farmers to safely process locally grown products for sale in farmers markets. At least 50% of beginning farmers benefitting from this project are women.

Accomplishments**Major goals of the project**

South Dakota Beginning Farmer Training, Mentoring, Networking, and Market Support Project's goals are to increase the number of successful beginning farmers and ranchers in South Dakota engaged in sustainable, profitable farming operations;

Final Report

Accession No. 223981

Project No. SDW-2010-03066

to increase the availability of locally grown foods and the market share of locally grown foods in South Dakota, and to enhance food security in South Dakota. The project's objectives over the next two years are to: 1. Train beginning farm families in whole farm planning, business management, value added marketing, and sustainable production methods 2. Increase early success and retention of beginning farmers and ranchers by facilitating mentor relationships between SD Farm Beginnings participants and "seasoned" farmers and ranchers with relevant experience 3. Increase success and retention of sixty beginning farm families by connecting them to South Dakota-based opportunities for farmland, equipment, and experience transfer in the DRA Farmer Network 4. Increase marketing success of one hundred South Dakota beginning farmers by providing market support through the South Dakota Local Foods Directory, and a new on-line local foods buying cooperative in eastern South Dakota Outcomes include: Up to forty beginning farm families will increase in their working knowledge and skills in goal setting and values clarification, whole farm planning, financial planning, time and money management, record keeping, sustainable farming methods, marketing, business planning, and connecting to resources. At least 60% of the family participants will use their completed plan and new knowledge to begin, modify, or expand a farming/ranching business. Up to eighty beginning farm families increase hands on knowledge of sustainable farming methods and successful marketing and planning strategies. Up to eighty potential beginning farm families will increase knowledge of the resources and educational opportunities available. Up to one hundred beginning farm families statewide will increase understanding of South Dakota food processing laws, and will understand how to comply with safety laws while successfully marketing locally grown and processed foods. Up to forty beginning farm families will form informal or formal mentoring relationships, lasting up to one year, with experienced farmers and ranchers who possess relevant skills and training to support participants' learning needs. Up to sixty beginning farm families will increase awareness of opportunities in South Dakota to obtain land, equipment, or other resources by linking with retiring or continuing farmers and ranchers. Up to seventy beginning farmer local will list products for sale in the South Dakota Local Foods Directory. Up to forty beginning farmers will regularly sell products locally through the on-line food buying cooperative.

What was accomplished under these goals?

Shortly after taking Farm Beginnings 77 percent of the participants were engaged in agriculture (an increase from 45%) and one year after graduation from Farm Beginnings 91% were engaged in agriculture. 85% said they felt knowledgeable or highly knowledgeable about farm business planning and felt prepared to do planning for their own farm businesses. One hundred percent of participants had a holistic farm goal and farm plan in place. 5500 Local Food Directories were published and distributed to the general public. Over 8500 visitors to the online version of the SD Local Food Directory.

www.sdlocalfood.org. The Farmer Network was launched in 2010 with 31 members (20 mentor farmers and 11 beginning farmers). 2011 it had 53 members (34 mentors and 19 beginning farmers). 2012 it had 73 members (42 mentor farmers and 31 beginning farmers). In 2010 five farm tours and trainings were held with 43 people attending. In 2011 five farm tours and trainings were held with 56 people attending. In 2012 five farm tours and trainings were held with 77 people attending. A recent survey of Farmer Network members found that as a result of the network, 63% of graduates had attended a farm tour, 16% had attended a skills session, and 32% had attended a conference or workshop advertised through the list serve. Sixty producers, farmers market leaders, and extension educators attended the four home food processing and safety workshops co-produced by DRA. Sales for the online local food cooperative for the grant time period were \$39,720. The coop had 149 members at the end of this time period. 45 members were producers on the coop. Five Farm Beginning graduated families sell through the on-line food coop.

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

OUTPUTS: Nineteen beginning farmer/rancher families took Farm Beginnings. 51% of the families enrolled had women and primary farm operators and almost all had a woman in the participating family unit. 71% of enrollees came from non-farm backgrounds 70% were under the age of 35. 61% had less than \$60,000 gross annual income and 30% had less than \$30,000. 26% had no access to land at the beginning of the course. 55% were not engaged in agriculture at the beginning of the course. 87% had little or no knowledge of farm business planning and felt unprepared to do farm planning for their own farm business. The Farmer Network was launched in 2010 as an offshoot of the Farm Beginnings class. The group was created to provide more networking between beginning and established farmers through mentorship and on-farm experiences. In fall of 2011 the group hosted its first meeting and established itself as a committee. Since then the committee's work has expanded to include hosting expanded educational offerings such as winter workshops; the development of an online wiki site to share resources; and the creation of a land access campaign. During the course of the project 14 farm tours and trainings were held. **PARTICIPANTS:** Frank James, Dakota Rural Action Director is the PI/PD for this project. He manages the staff, directs fundraising and course recruitment. Heidi Urlacher is the Farm Beginnings Course facilitator and organizer for the farmer network. She works directly with the course participants, steering committee and the farmer network. Holly Tilton Byrne is the local food coordinator and works on the local food directory and the local food cooperative. Twenty-eight presenters offered instruction during the course, with 22 of those identifying primarily as farmers, and the rest coming from agricultural or business-related backgrounds. All presenters received one-to-one training with DRA staff. This project is developing new rural leaders. Two of our Farm Beginnings graduates joined the Leadership Team and is

Final Report

Accession No. 223981	Project No. SDW-2010-03066
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working on advising the class. Three other graduates have taken on new leadership roles on DRA's Board of Directors, on the South Dakota Local Food Coop Steering Committee, and on DRA's staff. DRA worked with Dr. Meredith Redlin to develop evaluation materials. TARGET AUDIENCES: Of the 17 participating families in SD Farm Beginning courses between 2010 and 2012, 6 are women enrolled as the primary applicant, and an additional number of women are enrolled as secondary applicants/family members. Of participating families in the 2010- 2012 course, 47% had farm backgrounds, 63% were under the age of 35. Twenty percent had no access to land. PROJECT MODIFICATIONS: Nothing significant to report.

How have the results been disseminated to communities of interest?

{NO DATA ENTERED}

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

{NO DATA ENTERED}

Participants

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	0	0	0	0	0
Professional	0	0	0	0	0
Technical	0	0	0	0	0
Administrative	0	0	0	0	0
Other	0	0	0	0	0
Computed Total	0	0	0	0	0

Student Count by Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP) Code

{NO DATA ENTERED}

Target Audience

Products

Type	Status	Year Published	NIFA Support Acknowledged
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Citation

No publications reported this period

Other Products

Changes/Problems