

Title:	Bringing New Farmers to the Table: A Comprehensive Support Program to Meet North Carolina's Ten Percent Local Food Challenge		
Sponsoring Agency	NIFA	Project Status	COMPLETE
Funding Source	Non Formula	Reporting Frequency	Annual
Accession No.	223525	Grants.gov No.	GRANT10570622
Project No.	MONW-2010-03068	Proposal No.	2010-03068
Project Start Date	09/01/2010	Project End Date	08/31/2013
Reporting Period Start Date	09/01/2010	Reporting Period End Date	08/31/2013
Submitted By	Michael Morris	Date Submitted to NIFA	11/23/2013

Program Code: BFRDP

Program Name: Beginning Farmer and Rancher

Project Director

Michael Morris
210-265-3905
mikem@ncat.org

Recipient Organization

NATIONAL CENTER FOR APPROPRIATE
3040 CONTINENTAL DR
Butte, MONTANA 597014506
DUNS No. 81145500

Performing Department

{NO DATA ENTERED}

Co-Project Directors

Creamer, Nancy
Branan, Robert
Broadwell, Frederick

Departments

Horticulture Science
{NO DATA ENTERED}

Non-Technical Summary

Local food campaigns in North Carolina have been extremely successful, and the demand for locally-produced food now greatly exceeds the supply that is available. In order to meet the state's ambitious new goal of providing ten percent of its own food, North Carolina will need many new farmers. By the same token, local marketing represents the single best opportunity for beginning farmers to succeed. Our project, Bringing New Farmers to the Table, will take advantage of unique opportunities presented by North Carolina's new statewide Ten Percent local food campaign. We will design support for beginning farmers, and awareness of their needs, into every aspect of the Ten Percent campaign. By the end of this three-year project, we believe we can integrate support for new and beginning farmers deeply and permanently into the campaign. To accomplish this goal, we will provide intensive training to a new network of County Extension, Local and Regional Food Coordinators, helping them understand the extremely serious legal and practical issues facing new farmers. We will create educational materials for beginning farmers. We will offer workshops, webinars, direct technical assistance, and legal consulting services. We will offer new mentoring, intern, and apprenticeship services for new farmers. We will also create a new farmer placement program that will help communities turn vacant public lands into incubator farms. We will target our educational efforts to people in all parts of North Carolina who would like to start a farm; limited resource and minority beginning farmers; farmland owners who have resources to help beginning farmers establish a farm enterprise on their land; new farmers who still need to clear many hurdles if they are to establish a thriving and growing business; and the Local Food Coordinators in each of North Carolina's 100 counties, giving them the knowledge and resources they will need to support new farmers. We will disseminate the educational materials that we create nationally, through NCAT's sustainable agriculture program (ATTRA), bringing national attention to North Carolina's efforts on behalf of local food and new farmers.

Accomplishments

Major goals of the project

Project goal The project goal of Bringing New Farmers to the Table is to launch a robust support effort for beginning farmers that will complement, and be fully integrated into, North Carolina's new statewide Ten Percent local food campaign.
Supporting objectives A major project objective is to design support for beginning farmers, and awareness of their needs, into every aspect of the Ten Percent local food campaign. A key step will be training a new network of Extension Local Food Coordinators to provide technical support and referrals to new farmers. We will develop a variety of educational materials aimed at beginning farmers, making these available on the Ten Percent local food campaign web site. We will offer

workshops, webinars, direct technical assistance, and legal consulting services to beginning farmers, transitioning farmers, and landowners who are interested in making land available for farming. We will offer new mentoring, intern, and apprenticeship services for new farmers, and we will create a new farmer placement program that will help communities turn vacant public lands into incubator farms. An important objective will be disseminating all educational materials and lessons learned from this effort nationally, through NCAT's National Sustainable Agriculture Information Service (ATTRA). Project materials and results will also be linked to the National Curriculum and Training Clearinghouse for Beginning Farmers and Ranchers coordinated by the National Agriculture Library and American Farm Bureau Federation. Objective 1: Provide intensive training to the new network of Extension Local and Regional Food Coordinators on legal and practical issues facing new and beginning farmers. Build the capacity of Local Food Coordinators to provide technical support and helpful referrals. Objective 2: Develop new educational resources for new farmers, and make these materials available on the website for the Ten Percent local food campaign as well as NCAT's ATTRA website. Objective 3: Project partners will collaborate to provide workshops and webinars for new and beginning farmers on topics that go beyond commonly covered subjects such as farming skills and marketing. Tackle difficult, make-or-break issues such as business planning and risk management, as well as access to farmland, capital, and credit. Objective 4: Provide legal consulting services to new and transitioning farmers and farmland owners who participate in workshops. Objective 5: Connect and introduce new or prospective farmers to successful farming enterprises, through farm tours and case studies. Objective 6: Reinvigorate mentoring, intern, and apprenticeship services offered by the Carolina Farm Stewardship Association Objective 7: Create a new farmer placement program, under the leadership of the Center for Environmental Farming Systems, one that will help communities turn vacant public lands into incubator farms. Objective 8: Use NCAT's national sustainable agriculture information service project resources (ATTRA) to disseminate educational materials and case studies developed through this project. Bring national attention to North Carolina's efforts to support new farmers.

What was accomplished under these goals?

The project Bringing New Farmers to the Table conducted an aggressive and wide-reaching support campaign for beginning farmers in North Carolina. Our project activities were all based on the simple idea that support for local food requires support for beginning farmers. After all, without local farmers there can be no local food.

This project was led by the National Center for Appropriate Technology (NCAT), in collaboration with the Carolina Farm Stewardship Association (CFSA) and Center for Environmental Farming Systems (CEFS). We took advantage of unique opportunities offered by North Carolina's new statewide Ten Percent local food campaign--whose goal is for the state to provide ten percent of its own food. We integrated support for beginning farmers deeply into the Ten Percent campaign. For example, we provided intensive training to a new network of County Extension, Local and Regional Food Coordinators, helping them understand the legal and practical issues facing new farmers. We created a wide range of educational materials, and posted all these materials on a newly-created North Carolina New Farmers website. We offered workshops, webinars, and provided direct technical assistance and legal consulting services. We offered new mentoring, intern, and apprenticeship services for new farmers.

We also created a new farmer placement program that is helping four communities turn vacant public lands into incubator farms, where the next generation of farmers can hone their skills. These communities have been inspired to train local farmers and help them gain access to land.

We targeted our educational efforts to people in all parts of North Carolina who would like to start a farm. These included many limited resource and minority beginning farmers, farmland owners who have resources to help beginning farmers establish a farm enterprise on their land, early-stage farmers who still need to clear many hurdles if they are to establish a thriving and growing business, and Local Food Coordinators in each of North Carolina's 100 counties. We disseminated the educational materials that we created nationally, through NCAT's sustainable agriculture program (ATTRA). All of these efforts brought national attention to North Carolina's efforts on behalf of local food and new farmers.

Many people started farming or made their farms more sustainable as a direct result of this project. In 2012 we were able to identify and follow up with 64 of the 1536 people who attended our workshops in 2010 and 2011. Of these, 14 (22%) had started farming, 12 (19%) had developed farm plans, 8 (12%) had changed farming or land management practices, 11 (17%) had changed marketing practices, and 6 (9%) had changed business practices.

Objective #1: Provide intensive training to the new network of Extension Local and Regional Food Coordinators on legal and practical issues facing new and beginning farmers.

Project partners offered seven workshops and six farm tours aimed at North Carolina Cooperative Extension Service personnel, targeting especially agents designated as Local Food Coordinators. Five of the workshops were intensive day-long trainings for Extension personnel, focused on assisting beginning farmers. These took place in each of the five Extension regions of North Carolina.

Objective #2: Develop new educational resources for new farmers, and make these materials available on the website for the Ten Percent local food campaign as well as NCAT's ATTRA website.

NCAT and CEFS created 16 new publications, an e-learning course on business planning, and a new website (North Carolina New Farmers). The website includes a wide variety of materials related to land access, capital and credit, business planning, and marketing. It includes the most comprehensive set of announcements, references, and links aimed specifically at new farmers in the state of North Carolina. We also launched a listserve on farm incubators, which has around 80 members.

Objective #3: Project partners will collaborate to provide workshops and webinars for new and beginning farmers on topics that go beyond commonly covered subjects such as farming skills and marketing.

Our project delivered 62 face-to-face workshops that provided training to 1981 persons, including 1059 who were actively farming, 214 who had been farming less than a year, and 568 who were planning to start farming, as well as many established farmers, landowners, and agency personnel. Workshop topics included land acquisition, finance, business planning, marketing, and credit management. At least 1143 trainees (48%) met the USDA definition of "beginning farmer or rancher," having less than 10 years of farming experience. Among the beginning farmer trainees, 68 identified themselves as African-American, 35 (3%) as Hispanic, 35 (3%) as Native American, 11 (1%) as Asian, 156 (14%) as farm workers, 605 (53%) as women, and 274 (24%) as low-income persons, reporting total household incomes less than \$23,350 in each of the previous two years. NCAT created an 8-lesson e-learning course for beginning farmers, covering the basics of business planning. An accompanying workbook (Getting Into Farming) was also created and printed, with over 100 copies distributed free of charge.

Objective #4: Provide legal consulting services to new and transitioning farmers and farmland owners who participate in workshops.

Our course was fortunate to have Andrew Branan, J.D. on our staff, a lawyer specializing in agricultural law. He provided one-on-one legal consulting services to 40 persons, including new and transitioning farmers as well as farmland owners. We also printed a new edition of the workbook Planning the Future of Your Farm, a guide for retiring farmers and families that are interested in keeping farmland in production.

Objective #5: Connect and introduce new or prospective farmers to successful farming enterprises, through farm tours and case studies.

CFSA organized and offered 12 "beginning farmer only" farm tours, attended by 118 beginning farmers. NCAT created six case studies of successful North Carolina farms and posted these on the ATTRA website.

Objective #6: Reinvigorate mentoring, intern, and apprenticeship services offered by the Carolina Farm Stewardship Association

CFSA revived and expanded its Intern Referral Service and other mentoring, intern, and apprentice placement services. 263 internship positions were posted by 109 farms, and these resulted in at least 30 interns being placed on farms.

Objective #7: Create a new farmer placement program, under the leadership of the Center for Environmental Farming Systems, one that will help communities turn vacant public lands into incubator farms.

Through a competitive selection process, CEFS chose five North Carolina communities and began helping them plan and create incubator farms on public land. Support for these communities included a facilitated visioning process for community members and local farmers, conceptual drawings, travel support, and legal assistance.

Objective #8: Use NCAT's national sustainable agriculture information service project resources (ATTRA) to disseminate educational materials and case studies developed through this project. Bring national attention to North Carolina's efforts to support new farmers.

The Beginning Farmer area of NCAT's ATTRA website was reorganized and expanded. Materials from our project were made available from the ATTRA website, as well as through the North Carolina New Farmers website.

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

Training was a major focus of this project. We delivered 62 face-to-face workshops that provided training to 1981 persons, including 1059 who were actively farming. We also trained many aspiring farmers, landowners, and agency personnel.

We awarded scholarships to 120 beginning farmers and 60 extension agents, enabling them to attend the Carolina Farm Stewardship Association's Sustainable Agriculture Conferences in 2011-2013. All recipients attended workshops focused specifically on the needs of beginning farmers.

We also provided professional development training to 64 North Carolina Cooperative Extension Service personnel who attended five regional workshops on meeting the needs of beginning farmers.

How have the results been disseminated to communities of interest?

Results and products of this project are available through NCAT's ATTRA website (www.attra.ncat.org), as well as through the North Carolina New Farmers website (www.ncnewfarmers.org). The ATTRA website reaches a large national audience of people who are interested in the needs of beginning farmers. For example, in 2012, the ATTRA website received more than 615,000 visitors, who downloaded over 2.5 million publications.

We distributed over 1000 free hard copies of the new publications that were created through this project. We also provided over 10,000 electronic copies of these publications to clients who downloaded them from the ATTRA website.

NCAT created an 8-lesson e-learning course for beginning farmers, covering the basics of farm business planning. This course is available, free of charge, at www.northcarolina.ncat.org--or from the Beginning Farmer page of the ATTRA website. The course was created with iSpring Pro e-learning software, an innovative platform for making project results available to communities of interest. The eight lessons in the Getting Started in Farming course run as interactive presentations, giving the student a high degree of control over their own learning pace. These lessons are accompanied by several writing exercises and suggested readings, which may be downloaded and read while the student is working through the lessons. The courses also feature interview segments with several North Carolina farms, focusing on their business planning advice for newer farmers.

CEFS launched a listserv on farm incubators, which has grown to around 75 members.

The project Bringing New Farmers to the Table was mentioned at dozens of state and national conferences and meetings attended by staff from NCAT, CFSA, and CEFS.

We issued regular press releases. Project activities were also featured in several news stories. There were at least 30 news stories, press releases, advertisements, or interviews during the three years of the project.

Project members participated in the BFRD project directors' meetings in 2011 and 2012, sharing project results with representatives from other beginning farmer support efforts around the country.

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

{Nothing to report}

Participants**Actual FTEs for this Reporting Period**

Role	Faculty and Non-Students	Students within Staffing Roles			Computed Total by Role
		Undergraduate	Graduate	Post-Doctorate	
Scientist	1.5	0	0	0	1.5
Professional	0.5	0	0	0	0.5
Technical	0.1	0	0	0	0.1
Administrative	0.3	0	0	0	0.3
Other	0	0	0	0	0
Computed Total	2.4	0	0	0	2.4

Target Audience

People in North Carolina who would like to begin farming
 Farmland owners interested in helping beginning farmers establish farming enterprises
 Beginning North Carolina farmers in their first 10 years of operating a farm
 North Carolina Cooperative Extension agents who have been designated as Local Food Coordinators
 African American persons interested in farming

Limited resource persons interested in farming

Products

Type	Status	Year Published	NIFA Support Acknowledged
Journal Articles	Accepted	2014	YES

Citation

Lelekacs, J., O'Sullivan, J., Morris, M., Creamer, N. Incubator Farms as Beginning Farmer Support. Journal of Extension. Forthcoming.

Type	Status	Year Published	NIFA Support Acknowledged
Books	Published	2013	YES

Citation

Branan, A., Miller, L., Alcorta, M., Howard, T., Lewis, H., Morris, M. 2013. Getting into Farming: a Workbook for Beginning Farmers. National Center for Appropriate Technology. ISBN 978-0-9817745-3-4. 84 p.

Type	Status	Year Published	NIFA Support Acknowledged
Other	Published	2013	YES

Citation

Lelekacs, Joanna. Incubator Farm Work Breakdown Structure Foundation. 2013. Center for Environmental Farming Systems. 1 p. handout.

Type	Status	Year Published	NIFA Support Acknowledged
Other	Published	2013	YES

Citation

Lelekacs, Joanna. Site Design Programming for an Incubator Farm: Considerations for Site Design. 2013. Center for Environmental Farming Systems. 1 p. handout.

Type	Status	Year Published	NIFA Support Acknowledged
Other	Published	2013	YES

Citation

Morris, Mike. What Is a Beginning Farmer? Frequently Asked Questions. 2013. National Center for Appropriate Technology. 1 p. handout.

Type	Status	Year Published	NIFA Support Acknowledged
Other	Published	2013	YES

Citation

Morris, Mike. The Path to Farming: Understanding Beginning Farmers and Their Needs. 2013. National Center for Appropriate Technology. 1 p. handout.

Type	Status	Year Published	NIFA Support Acknowledged
Other	Published	2013	YES

Citation

Lelekacs, Joanna. Incubator Farm Resources and Funding. 2013. Center for Environmental Farming Systems. 1 p. handout.

Type	Status	Year Published	NIFA Support Acknowledged
Other	Published	2013	YES

Citation

Lelekacs, Joanna. Local Food System Stakeholders for Community Engagement: Potential Stakeholders to include in Incubator Farm Community Engagement Activities. 2013. Center for Environmental Farming Systems. 1 p. handout.

Type	Status	Year Published	NIFA Support Acknowledged
Other	Published	2013	YES

Citation

Boekelheide, Don. Hines Chapel Incubator Farm Suggestions and Resources. 2013. Center for Environmental Farming Systems. 2 p. research report.

Type	Status	Year Published	NIFA Support Acknowledged
Other	Published	2013	YES

Citation

Boekelheide, Don. LINC Urban Farm Resource and Other Opportunities. 2013. Center for Environmental Farming Systems. 6 p. research report.

Type	Status	Year Published	NIFA Support Acknowledged
Other	Published	2013	YES

Citation

Boekelheide, Don. Onslow County Incubator Farm Resource and Funding Suggestions. 2013. Center for Environmental Farming Systems. 2 p. research report.

Type	Status	Year Published	NIFA Support Acknowledged
Other	Published	2013	YES

Citation

Boekelheide, Don. Town of Robbins Incubator Farm Resource and Funding Suggestions. 2013. Center for Environmental Farming Systems. 11 p. research report.

Type	Status	Year Published	NIFA Support Acknowledged
Other	Published	2012	YES

Citation

Lelekacs, Joanna and Morris, Mike. Planting Seeds for New Farm Enterprises. Carolina Farm Stewardship Association: Stewardship News. 33(2) p. 4.

Type	Status	Year Published	NIFA Support Acknowledged
Conference Papers and	Other	2012	YES

Citation

Lelekacs, Joanna. Introduction to Incubator Farms. Hines Chapel Preserve Incubator Farm Kickoff Meeting. McLeansville, NC. September 13, 2012.

Type	Status	Year Published	NIFA Support Acknowledged
Conference Papers and	Other	2012	YES

Citation

Lelekacs, Joanna. Report from the Incubator Farm Field School. Onslow County Incubator Farm Steering Committee Meeting. Jacksonville, NC. October 12, 2012.

Type	Status	Year Published	NIFA Support Acknowledged
Conference Papers and	Other	2012	YES

Citation

Lelekacs, Joanna. Introduction to Sustainable Food Systems. Sustainable Local Food Systems and Markets in NC. Durham, NC: Duke University. November 14, 2012.

Type	Status	Year Published	NIFA Support Acknowledged
Conference Papers and	Other	2013	YES

Citation

Lelekacs, Joanna. Incubator Farms: Background and Relevance. Onslow County Farmers' Market Board of Directors meeting. Jacksonville, NC. January 17, 2013.

Type	Status	Year Published	NIFA Support Acknowledged
Conference Papers and	Other	2012	YES

Citation

Morris, Mike, Hinman, T., Lelekacs, J., et al. Bringing New Farmers to the Table. 27th Annual Sustainable Agriculture Conference. Greenville, SC. Poster presentation. November 27-8, 2012.

Type	Status	Year Published	NIFA Support Acknowledged
Conference Papers and	Other	2013	YES

Citation

Lelekacs, Joanna. Bringing New Farmers to the Table – Incubator Farm Project. Start2Farm Together Conference. Raleigh, NC. March 18, 2013.

Type	Status	Year Published	NIFA Support Acknowledged
Conference Papers and	Other	2013	YES

Citation

Lelekacs, Joanna. Bringing New Farmers to the Table. Hines Chapel Preserve Incubator Farm Community Input meeting. McLeansville, NC. March 25, 2013.

Type	Status	Year Published	NIFA Support Acknowledged
Conference Papers and	Other	2013	YES

Citation

Lelekacs, Joanna. Incubator Farms: Existing Programs. Guilford County Parks and Recreation Subcommittee. Greensboro, NC. August 13, 2013.

Type	Status	Year Published	NIFA Support Acknowledged
Conference Papers and	Other	2013	YES

Citation

Lelekacs, Joanna. Bringing New Farmers to the Table, Panel Presentation. Clemson Apprentice and Incubator Farm Conference. Clemson, SC. August 15, 2013.

Type	Status	Year Published	NIFA Support Acknowledged
Conference Papers and	Accepted	2013	YES

Citation

Lelekacs, Joanna. Farm Incubator Projects 101 - Holistic training and support for beginning farmers. Women in Sustainable Agriculture Conference, Des Moines, IA. Forthcoming November 7, 2013.

Type	Status	Year Published	NIFA Support Acknowledged
Conference Papers and	Published	2012	YES

Citation

Kleese, Tony. Creating a Successful Farm Plan. 27th Annual Sustainable Agriculture Conference. Greenville, SC. November 27, 2012.

Type	Status	Year Published	NIFA Support Acknowledged
Conference Papers and	Published	2012	YES

Citation

Branan, Andrew. Leasing or Buying Land to Farm. 27th Annual Sustainable Agriculture Conference. Greenville, SC. November 27, 2012.

Type	Status	Year Published	NIFA Support Acknowledged
Conference Papers and	Published	2012	YES

Citation

Polishuk, Ellen. Beginning Farm Marketing. 27th Annual Sustainable Agriculture Conference. Greenville, SC. November 27, 2012.

Type	Status	Year Published	NIFA Support Acknowledged
Conference Papers and	Published	2012	YES

Citation

Lamie, Dave. Good Moves and Goofs for a New Small Farm. 27th Annual Sustainable Agriculture Conference. Greenville, SC. November 28, 2012.

Type	Status	Year Published	NIFA Support Acknowledged
Conference Papers and	Published	2012	YES

Citation

Marlow, Scott. Farm Financial Sustainability: How Do You Know? 27th Annual Sustainable Agriculture Conference. Greenville, SC. November 28, 2012.

Other Products**Product Type**

Educational Aids or Curricula

Description

"Getting Started in Farming" an e-learning course that includes eight lessons on goal setting, resource assessment, land access, marketing, budgeting, record keeping, risk management, and farm financing. The lessons, worksheets, and writing assignments guide the student through the process of writing a basic farm business plan.

Product Type

Audio or Video

Description

Six case studies. Interactive video presentations featuring interviews with successful North Carolina farmers, who talk about business planning and share insights and advice for new farmers.

Product Type

Educational Aids or Curricula

Description

The NC Incubator Farm Network listserve maintained and moderated(75 members).

Product Type

Other

Description

The NC New Farmers website maintained and expanded. (<http://www.ncnewfarmers.org>)

Product Type

Other

Description

120 scholarships awarded to beginning farmers, enabling them to attend the Carolina Farm Stewardship Association annual conference and receive training.

Product Type

Other

Description

60 scholarships awarded to NC Cooperative Extension agents (mainly Local Food Coordinators), enabling them to attend the Carolina Farm Stewardship Association's annual conference and receive training.

Product Type

Other

Description

Ongoing support to the five new incubator farm programs that we are supporting in North Carolina, including meeting facilitation, planning assistance, community organizing, and research on funding options.

Product Type

Other

Description

Service to the NCA&T State University Beginning Farmer Advisory Council.

Product Type

Other

Description

Presentation to Central Carolina Community College Sustainable Agriculture class: attended by 20 students planning to start farming.

Product Type

Other

Description

Presentation about land access to NC State Agricultural Law class: attended by 25 students, of whom 8 were planning to start farming.

Product Type

Other

Description

91 internship positions posted by 42 farms on the Carolina Farm Stewardship Association intern referral service, resulting in at least 12 interns placed on farms.

Product Type

Other

Description

At least 40 mentions of the project and NIFA support, at meetings in North Carolina and nationally.

Product Type

Other

Description

At least 104 phone, e-mail, and in-person one-on-one consultations with beginning farmers on topics related to training, business planning, and land access.

Product Type

Other

Description

At least 50 events where the project had a visible presence and project materials were distributed.

Product Type

Other

Description

Presentations at the NC Organic Growers' School, attended by 50 beginning farmers.

Product Type

Other

Description

One-on-one legal consultations with at least 40 beginning farmers.

Changes/Problems

Although this project evolved considerably over its three-year lifespan, there were no major changes in our approach.

We had originally envisioned offering a series of eight live webinars, covering the basics of farming. We decided to approach this differently, and instead created an eight-lesson e-learning course, guiding students through the process of creating a farm business plan. This format makes this material available to a much wider audience, allows us to update the presentations easily, and opens many possibilities for adapting this material into related training efforts.

As another illustration, in our proposal we focused strongly on the idea of integrating support for beginning farmers into North Carolina's statewide Ten Percent Campaign. We did, in fact, accomplish this. However, we also expanded our range of audiences and topics considerably, launching many activities that were only indirectly related to the Ten Percent Campaign. We remain convinced that there is great potential in tying support for beginning farmers directly to support for local food--essentially presenting these issues as two sides of the same coin.

Finally, we learned a great deal from many other projects funded through NIFA's Beginning Farmer & Rancher Development Project. As an example, project staff and a North Carolina Cooperative Extension agent attended an incubator farm training offered by the New Entry Sustainable Farming Project. This had an immediate and profoundly positive impact on the incubator programs that we helped to launch in North Carolina.

