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Program Code: BFRDP

Program Name: Beginning Farmer and Rancher

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Recipient Organization

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Non-Technical Summary

Emerging trends in U.S. agriculture suggest that in order to preserve our agricultural resource base we need to establish, sustain, and preserve our farms, farmers, and farmland. A growing number of nongovernmental groups, Cooperative Extension associations, and USDA agencies are working to improve the viability of new farms, and the economic, social, and environmental fabric in which they are entrenched. These initiatives are responding to an overwhelming concern of a steady decline in the number of individuals entering into agriculture coupled by an increase in the number of exiting farmers and ranchers. The rationale for this project is framed by these critical issues and their impact on the future of family farms, the farm economy, and communities in Virginia. Moreover, Virginia is a state that has the potential to strengthen opportunities for beginning farmers and ranchers through enhanced collaboration and program development. While several groups currently provide on-the-ground education and services for beginning farmers and ranchers, our research and outreach experiences indicate that they work in isolation from each other, therefore missing opportunities for sharing resources, learning best educational practices, cross-promotion and organizational support, identifying needs, and addressing the larger issues impacting beginning farmers Virginia. Therefore, participants are often presented with educational events and activities that are too limited in scope, reach, and consistency for successful farm start-up and retention. This project draws upon participatory research methods (Greenwood & Levin, 1998), adult program planning theory (Cervero & Wilson, 2005), and experiential learning theory (Fenwick, 2000) to adequately address the various programmatic and start-up needs of aspiring and new farmers in Virginia. Anticipated outcomes include the creation of sustainable educational networks and social support for beginning farmers by developing a Virginia Beginning Farmer Coalition; the adoption and implementation of best educational practices, whole farm planning curricula, and guidebook for farm entry in Virginia; and ongoing participation in virtual and mentoring communities by farmers. We also expect that of the 300-450 anticipated program participants, at least 50% will attempt to become involved in agricultural enterprises, and 20% will be operating an enterprise within 5 years in Virginia. These outcomes should produce several benefits. First, project outcomes could enhance food security, community viability, and agricultural profitability in Virginia as beginning farmers enter into and expand local and regional markets. Second, we expect that this project will produce strategies and approaches that will be transferrable to other locations where participatory-based education for and with farmers is not as familiar. Finally, we believe this project could help bridge perceived cultural and social differences by bringing together the experiences and knowledge of a diversity of educators, beginning farmers, and established farmers in Virginia to democratically define and formulate program curricula and support networks.

Accomplishments

Major goals of the project

The long-term goal of this project is to improve opportunities for beginning farmers and ranchers to establish and sustain viable agricultural operations in Virginia through the development and enhancement of innovative educational programs and networks. To reach our long-term goal, this Standard BFRDP project will focus on meeting the expressed needs of Virginia's beginning farmers and ranchers and supporting the development of social networks through which they can gain vital skills, information, technical assistance, and business capacity for long-term agricultural viability. Our four supportive objectives are to: 1) establish a diverse coalition of Virginia organizations and land-grant universities to support the development and growth of education, training, and networking opportunities for Virginia's beginning farmers and ranchers; 2) collaboratively develop and deliver whole farm planning curriculum for "new and aspiring" farmers and ranchers using experiential learning and classroom delivery methods in four focus areas: business planning, land acquisition and tenure, agricultural marketing, and sustainable farming practices; 3) develop and deliver an interactive online curriculum in the four focus areas, illustrated by examples from the project's activities and events; 4) develop and strengthen mentoring networks to facilitate the exchange of knowledge and skills of experienced farmers and ranchers with the beginning farmer and rancher community. Expected Outputs for this project include: 1) Conduct coalition partner meetings and focus groups to create a social network and communication channels among Virginia beginning farmer Coalition members that will foster organizational capacity building for better problem solving and resource exchange, gap identification for enhanced programs and services, improved peer learning and mentor learning infrastructure, and a conference to disseminate project results (e.g., curriculum and lessons learned); 2) Create whole farm planning curriculum that comprises an introductory-level whole farm planning course using classroom and hands-on methods and an advanced-level whole farm business acceleration course focused on particular enterprise areas as defined by the interests of beginning farmers; 3) Develop and disseminate companion training guide to at least ten participating Coalition members and make available for online users; 4) Produce a diversity of online resources through project website to reach a larger, state-wide audience, including an on-going "virtual center" for lifelong learning after the grant, online social networking platforms to attract young and aspiring farmers, and videos or webinars illustrating field-based course instruction; 5) Create educational materials for integration in curriculum that guide farmers-in-training through personal learning stages from novice to established farmer; 7) Create a referral system that lists at least 30 experienced farmers or ranchers willing to mentor beginning farmers or provide internships; 8) Train two farm mentor coordinators to help facilitate mentor networks and educational events.

What was accomplished under these goals?

The VBFRCP aims to improve opportunities for beginning farmers and ranchers (BFRs) to establish & sustain viable operations & communities in VA by providing BFRs with whole farm planning (WFP) education using experiential and classroom training methods while also enhancing collaboration and organizational capacity across the agriculture service provider sector for long-term training success. To reach our goal, the VBFRCP operates at the local & state level to develop/ launch WFP curriculum & programs, online resources & social networking, mentoring, & an effective communication system for service providers. Unique to this project is its community-based participatory approach to program design/ implementation whereby a statewide coalition of 27 agricultural organizations, agencies, & farm businesses work together to develop & implement programming. VBFRCP successfully achieved each project aim illustrated by outcomes & impacts: 1) enhanced organizational capacity & communication of service providers; 2) implemented first-ever statewide assessment of program & delivery needs & preferences in VA that informed program & curricular design; 3) developed comprehensive WFP curriculum and resources for BFRs & providers (7 modules, 20+ resources, 1 manual); 4) launched resource intensive website, social media forums, & webinar series to complement face-to-face trainings & address distance learning needs; 5) designed/offered 7 regional WFP programs that trained 528 BFRs using WFP curriculum; 6) reached 445 other participants with WFP webinar series (n=200), conference workshops (n=210), & self-study (n=35) of curriculum; 7) facilitated mentoring with over 30 farmers serving as mentors in their communities; 8) increased knowledge of Extension, USDA, & other Coalition member resources, services, & networking communities of at least 95% of reporting BFRs in WFP programs; 9) increased WFP skills, knowledge, and abilities of at least 90% of reporting BFRs in WFP programs to start/enhance new farm enterprises; 10) assisted at least 60 reporting BFRs to be market ready/improve market readiness; 11) sustained programming beyond the life of the grant illustrated by the formulation of the VBFRCP as a statewide Coalition-based Extension Program. **1 (Coalition) (done)** Activities: Coalition elected a steering committee to guide Coalition process. 9 Coalition meetings took place with additional meeting planned for 2014. Over 300 Coalition members in attendance Y2-Y3. Coalition grew from 12 to 27 entities. Data: Formative evaluations administered after each meeting. Qualitative measures show enhanced networking & capacity building within Coalition. One respondent shared, "[Coalition] has made collaborative efforts possible that are paying off as we share expertise." A summative evaluation shows 95% of respondents strongly agreed/agreed that project provided suitable educational & resource support to enable BFRs to successfully start farming. Respondents also ranked "Networking and Capacity Building among Service Providers" as most important project activity. Key outcomes: Meetings increased networking capacity for statewide referral system. New evaluations are planned for 2014 to better understand reach and depth of collaboration and impact of Coalition model. Advisory group was elected in 8/2013 to guide ongoing work of the Coalition. The VBFRCP is currently operating as a state-wide and coalition-based Extension program that has a sustainability plan to maintain the Coalition and local WFP programs. This project also enabled the first ever BFR coalition in Virginia and the southern region. **2 (Curriculum/Programs) (done)** Activities: Developed/shared results of a statewide

survey & 3 focus groups revealing program & training needs and resource preferences. Curriculum writing team drafted modules based on survey & focus group results, steering committee input, & Coalition member expertise. The WFP curriculum was shared with Coalition members during Y2-Y3. Modules available for self-study upon request (n=35 contacts) on website. Modules submitted to VA Coop.Extension for formatting/design. USDA released post-award sub grantee funds in 2012, enabling 7 WFP teams to offer placed-based programs Y2-Y3 (n=528 participants). Each WFP team implemented course or workshop-based programs using several approaches to fit local needs: field trainings, farm tours, classroom instruction, and webinars. Between Y2-Y3, 7 additional workshops were offered Virginia Tech mang. team with 210 participants using WFP modules. PD also provided webinars for Coalition members (e.g., NRCS) and other BFRDP projects (e.g., EIEIO CoP). Data: Content areas & educational delivery preferences were determined by the statewide survey and regional focus groups. Formative evaluations of curriculum by the 7 WFP teams also to WFP module and program improvements. (e.g., USDA FSA & Farm Credit edits). Second, summative evaluations of WFP program participants illustrate a wide diversity of BFR participation and impacts in knowledge gains. Ages ranged 18-70 years old. Majority (60%) of reporting BFR participants classified themselves as male and at least 40% female. 65% of reporting participants labeled themselves explorer/beginner with 35% reported as a start-up, diversifying or transitioning farmer. Women, immigrant, & African American BFRs comprised at least 30% of reporting participants. 90% of reporting participants had increase in WFP knowledge, skills, and abilities to start or sustain new enterprises. 95% of respondents reported new knowledge of Extension/Coalition organization resources and services. Nearly 10% of reporting participants were undecided/declined to begin farming. Key outcomes: 7 WFP trainings will be offered in 2013-2014. A new WFP team will offer workshops through partnership with Virginia State University. Post program evaluations will occur in 2014 to better track impacts. Sustainability of local WFP programming has been achieved beyond life of grant. **3 (Online Resources) (done)** Activities: Resource intensive website launched Y2 to enhance learning/networking. A Coalition member listserv (n=154) & BFR listserv (n=471) increased communication among BFRs & service providers. Summative evaluation: 90% of respondents reported they were satisfied with online communication/networking options. Social marketing/learning includes Facebook (n=558 Likes), YouTube (57 subscribers/1350 views), & Blog. YouTube Channel was launched with 6 BFR cases (n=20 videos) designed for self-study and integration into WFP programming. A webinar series was launched with 20 sessions (n=200 participants) that cover WFP topics. Key outcomes: Online resources are successful to address need for "one-stop" repository and sharing. Providers & farmers reported that "VBFRCP online resources are great tools to use at a distance" and "YouTube channel is a creative way to tell beginning farmer stories." This project provided necessary means to develop and sustain these tools that were non-existent before grant project. Online resources and social media will continue after the life of the grant through PD's programming through Extension. Coalition is interested in developing new online resources to support (not replace) face-to-face programming. **4 (Mentoring) (done)** Activities: 3 mentoring networks established with 3 farm mentor coordinators (FMCs). 32 mentors/16 mentees recruited and trained, and 10 mentor/mentee pairings have been made and continue to succeed. Unpaired mentors participate in networking activities. All mentees participated WFP programs. FMCs provided training to mentors and mentees through farm tours, networking sessions, consultations, and regional newsletter disseminations. Key outcomes : Mentoring is planned for 2014 through a new certification program to be disseminated by state-wide FMC and Extension agents to offer mentoring in local counties.

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

Training Activities with Farmers

1. Seven whole farm planning programs (courses/workshop series) took place regionally in Virginia from 2011-2013. These programs were developed through 7 whole farm planning teams through the Virginia Beginning Farmer and Rancher Coalition Program. Coursework/workshop-based programs were designed with newly drafted developed WFP curriculum for a range of beginning farmer audiences (explorer to transitional) using experiential, classroom, & supportive, online teaching methods. Course offerings reached a total of 528 beginning farmer participants Y2 and Y3.
2. A webinar series was launched with 20 webinar presentations that cover whole farm planning topics that may be sued for self-study and integration into whole farm planning programming. A total of 200 participants were reached through webinar presentations. Webinar presenters were experts in marketing, land tenure and transition, financial planning, soil conservation, and GAP certification (e.g., Virginia Cooperative Extension specialists and agents; USDA FSA professionals; USDA NRCS professionals; Farm Credit professionals; Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services service providers, all of which were members of the statewide Coalition.
3. Farm mentoring took place from 2011-2013, led by 3 farm mentor coordinators regionally across Virginia (southwest, central, and northern Virginia). In total, 32 mentors and 16 mentees were recruited and trained, and 10 mentor/mentee pairings have been made and continue to succeed. All mentees participated in one of the 7 WFP programs offered regionally to beginning farmers. Unpaired mentors still participate in networking events and communications led by farm mentor coordinator.

Professional Development with Service Providers

1. Seven Virginia Beginning Farmer and Rancher Coalition Project teams, located regionally,, developed and implemented 7 Whole Farm Planning (WFP) programs for beginning farmers and ranchers for during 2010-2013. Virginia Cooperative Extension was directly involved in these WFP programs. Professional development trainings were provided in winter, spring

and fall 2012 (n=3 sessions); winter 2013 (n=1 session) to support teams to design and implement, and evaluate program outcomes. Professional development trainings were offered on Virginia Tech campus and hosted at Coalition partner organization settings (e.g., Farm Credit office) regionally to also increase networking while learning about program development and evaluation. Support was also provided by PD to help complete final reports for the Whole Farm Planning Curriculum and Programs. The seven teams and programs include:

Appalachian Sustainable Development and Virginia Cooperative Extension: Whole Farm Planning in Southwest Virginia
 Attimo Winery: Whole Farm Planning for New Wineries and Vineyards
 Fauquier County Agricultural Development, Fauquier Education Farm, and Virginia Cooperative Extension: The Northern Piedmont Beginning Farmer Program
 Grayson LandCare: Beginning Farmer Support on the Blue Ridge Plateau
 SustainFloyd: Pocket Farm Class
 Virginia Association for Biological Farming: Farm School for Beginners
 Virginia Farm Bureau Young Farmers and the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services: Certified Farm Seeker Program.

2. The Virginia Beginning Farmer & Rancher Coalition formed to as a way to collaboratively address start-up needs of Virginia's beginning farmers and ranchers by offering high impact outreach, training and resource support. The Coalition acts as an umbrella network of organizations to assist in the development and enhancement of whole farming planning programs, online learning, social networking, and farmer mentoring. Professional development was a primary goal for Coalition meetings. Over the course of the three year project, 9 "capacity building" meetings were held from January 2012-August 2015. Strategic planning, networking development, whole farm planning training and reporting, and state-wide assessment planning and reporting were central professional development activities held at these meetings. Example of output from Coalition meeting activity includes: Using strategic planning session, a new project proposal (funding through Virginia Tech's College of Agriculture and Life Science Competitive and Integrated Grant Program) was developed and submitted and awarded that was put into practice in September 2013 (once the USDA BFRDP funding ended on August 31, 2013). Therefore, Coalition professional development activity directly led to the planning and implementation of the sustainability of the Virginia Beginning Farmer and Rancher Coalition Program. The Virginia Beginning Farmer & Rancher Coalition organizations include:

AgrAbility Virginia
 Agricultural Development Department, Fauquier County
 Appalachian Sustainable Development
 Attimo Winery
 Bracketts Farm
 Farm Service Agency (USDA)
 Fauquier Education Farm
 Grayson LandCare
 Hethwood Market (steering committee)
 Laurel Farm (steering committee)
 Local Food Hub
 Mountain View Farm & Vineyard (steering committee)
 Natural Resource Conservation Service (USDA)
 Piedmont Environmental Council
 Rural Development (USDA)
 SustainFloyd
 Virginia Association for Biological Farming
 Virginia Cooperative Extension (steering committee)
 Virginia Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services
 Virginia Farm Bureau Young Farmers Program
 Virginia Farm Credit
 Virginia Forage and Grasslands Council
 Virginia State University (steering committee)
 Virginia Tech, College of Agriculture and Life Sciences (steering committee)
 Virginia Team Ag Ed
 VT Earthworks
 Young Farmers of Virginia

3. A professional development initiative was developed and launched in the final months of the grant period of performance: Provide regional, "Train the Trainer" sessions for the all service professionals who are involved (current members) in the Virginia Beginning Farmer and Rancher Coalition Program (VBFRCP), and for those would like to learn more (new or potential members) about this state-wide and coalition-model Extension program. These one day

trainings were planned to take place from 9am-4pm and designed to help providers: 1) become familiar with and make use of the newly developed VBFRCPC resources, focusing on "whole farm planning" modules and online resources; 2) develop skills and knowledge about specific teaching and learning approaches related to "whole farm planning" content area ; 3) develop and implement program evaluations to ensure successful programing and reporting; 4) build networking opportunities with new and established farmers through the VBFRCPC Farm Mentor Network; 5) utilize the VBFRCPC resource network for effective referrals, collaborations, and capacity building; and create networking opportunities with other "beginning farmer educator" colleagues. Each training (n=4) provides the newly developed VBFRCPC curricular and training manual resources. In the spirit of our community-based approach, Coalition member service providers directly participate in the trainings as leaders and content experts, especially those members who lead WFP teams Y2 and Y3.

How have the results been disseminated to communities of interest?

The majority of our outreach and program dissemination came through the Virginia Beginning Farmer and Rancher Coalition Program media outlets (beginning farmer listserv, agriculture service provider listserv, website, Facebook, YouTube, and Blog), extensive organizational network and referral system (27 partnering organizations), and purposeful event outreach and media releases. Examples of event outreach included having a booth at a number of Virginia agriculture events, such as 1) Virginia Ag Expo sponsored by Virginia Cooperative Extension; 2) Virginia State Universities' Small Family Farm Conference; 3) Farm Bureau Leadership Conference and Farm Bureau Young Farmer Expos; 4) Virginia Agriculture Teacher Association Conference; 5) the Virginia Biological Farming Association's yearly conference event; 6) Virginia Forage and Grassland Council winter program events; 7) Young Farmer of Virginia's annual meeting and workshop series; 8) SustainFloyd film events and community meetings.

Examples of media releases, news, and publications include: 1) Lancaster Farming article on the Virginia Beginning and Rancher Coalition Program; 2) Farm Bureau Video on FarmLink and the Virginia Beginning and Rancher Coalition Program http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wg_WpQsmNcU&feature=youtu.be; 3) Article for dissemination by Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (VDACS), written by Matthew J. Lohr, Commissioner of Agriculture in Virginia; 4) "Virginia Tech Helps Cultivate New Farmers" article by the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences at Virginia Tech; and 5) Volume 15 Summer 2012 edition of the USDA Small Farm Digest, "Getting Started in Farming" (pages 78-79); 6) Virginia Beginning Farmer and Rancher Coalition Program Newsletter dissemination.

Finally, the Virginia Beginning and Rancher Coalition Program team presented survey and focus group results, program curriculum, and farm mentoring success at the 2011 and 2012 Virginia Cooperative Extension Winter In-service Conference and several national conferences targeting agriculture professionals and social science research communities from 2010-2013. Examples include: Southern Region Rural Sociology Association (SRSA) annual meeting; Sustainable Agriculture Education Association (SAEA) conference, and the North American Colleges and Teachers of Agriculture (NACTA).

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	0.3	1.5	0	3.3
Professional	1	0	0	0	1
Technical	1	0	0	0	1
Administrative	0.3	0	0	0	0.3
Other	0	0	0	0	0
Computed Total	3.8	0.3	1.5	0	5.6

Target Audience

The Virginia Beginning Farmer and Rancher Coalition Project is dedicated to addressing the needs of the spectrum of beginning farmers and ranchers in Virginia. The Coalition recognizes a diversity of farming experiences, backgrounds, and aims held by Virginia beginning farmers and ranchers. From the perspective of on-farm experience: The target audience includes:

Prospective or Explorer farmers: individuals interested in starting a farm or ranch. This includes next generation farm family members as well as those who do not come from a farming background.

Start-up farmers: individuals who are in the early stages of their agricultural operation, often within one to three years of farming or ranching

Re-strategizing farmers: farmers who are making changes to their operation after farming for approximately four to seven years. The individuals usually have increased decision-making responsibility and commitment to farming.

Establishing farmers: those farmers that are expanding, diversifying, and stabilizing within years eight to ten of the beginning farmer period.

Transitioning farmers: individuals who are family farm members who have decision making roles on the farm without having primary farm operator status.

Specific target audiences served throughout the last three years include:

1. Socially disadvantaged farming groups were specific audiences outreached to and involved in whole farm planning programming (effort: classroom instruction and mentoring) for year two and three. These were stated goals of the Project and Coalition members. Targeted groups include: African American farmers, immigrant farmers, and women farmers. While each of our whole farm planning teams reached out and programmed with socially disadvantaged farmers, Virginia State University; Virginia Cooperative Extension; Fauquier Education Farm; and the Virginia Biological Farming Association, as Coalition members (and members of whole farm planning teams), illustrated successful programming and outreach with these target audiences. Our Coalition programming also included strategically planning for socially disadvantaged farmers in year three by way of recruiting African American mentor farmers to mentor beginning farmers through the project's farm mentor network (effort: on-farm teaching and learning)

2. Through the Coalition's input, young farmers (18-35 year old) were another group our project aimed to reach in year two and three. Two whole farm planning teams targeted and reached the majority of our young farmer participants, especially those from farming backgrounds (e.g., heritage/transitioning farmers): Virginia Farm Bureau Young Farmers and Grayson LandCare. (effort: classroom instruction).

3. Agricultural Service Providers: Provide education and resource support to Virginia's beginning farmers and ranchers are essential project stakeholders. This project follows a coalition approach where organizations & farmers collaboratively develop and support project activity. The Coalition acts as an umbrella network of organizations to assist in the development and enhancement of VBFRCF whole farming planning programs, educational resource support, service provider referrals, and networking. The 27 units/groups who belong to the Virginia Beginning Farmer and Rancher Coalition comprise Virginia-based service providers. Effort was: 1) development of curriculum or innovative teaching methodologies, and 2) extension and outreach. The Virginia Beginning Farmer & Rancher Coalition Project has developed a diverse, statewide coalition of beginning farmer and rancher stakeholders that represent:

Farmer educators (Attimo Winery, Bracketts Farm, Farm, Laurel Farm, Hethwood Market, Mountain View Farm & Vineyard) Virginia Tech (VT) (e.g., faculty and students)

Virginia State University (VSU) (faculty and staff)

Virginia Cooperative Extension (VCE) (extension agents and specialists)

Non-governmental sector (e.g., Appalachian Sustainable Development, Local Food Hub, Fauquier Education Farm, Grayson LandCare, Farm Bureau Young Farmers, Young Farmers of Virginia, SustainFloyd, Virginia Biological Farming Association) Local, State and Federal Government (e.g., Fauquier County Agricultural Development Office, Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, Farm Service Agency (FSA, USDA), Rural Development (RD, USDA), Natural Resource Conservation (NRCS, USDA)

Agriculture Teachers: (e.g., Virginia Team Ag Ed and Virginia Agriculture Teacher Association)

See VBFRCF website for more information about the Coalition and our coalition-model approach to beginning farmer training and program development: <http://www.vabeginningfarmer.aee.vt.edu/coalition/index.html>

Products

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

Citation

Niewolny, K., Westfall-Rudd., D., Rudd, R. Hodges, S., Benson, M., & Smith, M., & Scott, K. (2012). Community-based participatory research as a social change vehicle for cultivating new and beginning farmers in Virginia. Paper presentation at the 43rd Southern Rural Sociological Association Meeting. Birmingham, AL.

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

Citation

Niewolny, K., Westfall-Rudd, D., Benson, M., Smith, M., & Helms, J. (2012). Whole farm planning as a framework for participatory-based education for beginning farmers and farm service providers: A lesson in collaboration. Paper presentation at the 5th National Sustainable Agriculture Education Conference. Corvallis, OR.

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

Citation

Scott, K., Isbell, C., & Hilleary, J. (2012). Exploring the role of mentoring as an educational approach for sustaining the next generation farmer. Paper presentation at the 5th National Sustainable Agriculture Education Conference. Corvallis, OR.

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

Citation

Niewolny, K., Benson, M., Rudd, R., Smith, M., Hodges, S., & Westfall-Rudd, D. (2012). Collaborative survey design and implementation for beginning farmer and Rancher education needs and delivery preferences. Poster Presented at the 2012 Winter Conference for Virginia Cooperative Extension. Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA.

Type	Status	Year Published	NIFA Support Acknowledged
Other	Published	2012	YES

Citation

Benson, M., Niewolny, K., & Rudd, R. (2012). Virginia Beginning Farmer and Rancher Survey Report and Instrument. Virginia Beginning Farmer and Rancher Coalition Project. Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA.

Type	Status	Year Published	NIFA Support Acknowledged
Other	Published	2013	YES

Citation

Niewolny, K., Kloetzli, C., & Vallotton, A. (2013). Successful Farm Start-up for Beginners: Virginia Beginning Farmer and Rancher Coalition Program. AEE-67P, Virginia Cooperative Extension. Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA.

Type	Status	Year Published	NIFA Support Acknowledged
Other	Awaiting Publication	2013	YES

Citation

Benson, M., Niewolny, K., & Rudd, R. (in press). An evaluation of the program, training and resource needs of Virginia beginning farmers. Virginia Cooperative Extension. Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA.

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

Citation

Niewolny, K., Westfull-Rudd, D., Rudd, R., Hodges, S., Scott, K., Benson, M., & Smith, M. (2012, February). Virginia Beginning Farmer and Rancher Coalition Project. Poster Presentation at the 2nd Annual Beginning Farmer & Rancher Conference, Grand Rapids, MI.

Type	Status	Year Published	NIFA Support Acknowledged
Conference Papers and	Published	2011	YES

Citation

Vallotton A., Dorn, S., Niewolny, K., (2011, August). The times they are a-changin: The role of cooperative extension in engaging sustainable new farmers. Roundtable paper presentation at the 2011 Sustainable Agriculture Education Association Conference, Lexington, KY

Type	Status	Year Published	NIFA Support Acknowledged
Conference Papers and	Published	2011	YES

Citation

Niewolny, K., Meyer, A.L., Lamie, D., & Dupont, T. (2011, August). Local innovation for/with beginning farmers: Four place-based approaches to beginning farmer training, mentoring, & program development. Panel and paper presentation at the 2011 Sustainable Agriculture Education Association Conference, Lexington, KY.

Type	Status	Year Published	NIFA Support Acknowledged
Other	Published	2013	YES

Citation

Niewolny, K., & Ghert, K. (2013). Common Ground: The Virginia Beginning Farmer and Rancher Coalition Program. Virginia Cooperative Extension, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA. Retrieved at <http://www.vabeginningfarmer.aee.vt.edu/community-university-common-ground.pdf>

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

Citation

Niewolny, K. (July, 2013). Building Capacity & Sustainable Partnerships: A Community-Based Participatory Approach to Beginning Farmer Training in Virginia. Presentation for the USDA BFRDP EIEIO Community of Practice.

Type	Status	Year Published	NIFA Support Acknowledged
Other	Published	2012	YES

Citation

Niewolny, K., & Scott, K. (2012). Spring 2012 Newsletter of the Virginia Beginning Farmer and Rancher Coalition Program. Virginia Cooperative Extension, Virginia Tech. Blacksburg, VA.

Type	Status	Year Published	NIFA Support Acknowledged
Other	Published	2012	YES

Citation

Niewolny, K., & Scott, K. (2012). Summer 2012 Newsletter of the Virginia Beginning Farmer and Rancher Coalition Program. Virginia Cooperative Extension, Virginia Tech. Blacksburg, VA.

Type	Status	Year Published	NIFA Support Acknowledged
Other	Other	2013	YES

Citation

Niewolny, K., & Scott, K. (2013). Winter 2013 Newsletter of the Virginia Beginning Farmer and Rancher Coalition Program. Virginia Cooperative Extension, Virginia Tech. Blacksburg, VA.

Type	Status	Year Published	NIFA Support Acknowledged
Other	Published	2013	YES

Citation

Niewolny, K., & Scott, K. (2013). Summer 2012 Newsletter of the Virginia Beginning Farmer and Rancher Coalition Program. Virginia Cooperative Extension, Virginia Tech. Blacksburg, VA.

Type	Status	Year Published	NIFA Support Acknowledged
Conference Papers and	Published	2011	YES

Citation

Niewolny, K. (2011). Virginia Beginning Farmer and Rancher Coalition Program. The 2nd annual Project Director (PD) Meeting for the Beginning Farmer & Rancher Development Program (BFRDP). Colorado State University, Fort Collins, Colorado.

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

Citation

Niewolny, K., & Scott, K. (2011). Virginia Beginning Farmer and Rancher Coalition Program. The 3rd annual Project Director (PD) Meeting for the Beginning Farmer & Rancher Development Program (BFRDP). Rochester, Minnesota.

Other Products**Product Type**

Audio or Video

Description

The Virginia Beginning Farmer and Rancher Coalition Program developed a series of videos that showcase several profile stories, and other beginning farmer footage in Virginia. The videos range from two minutes to five minutes and describe challenges and opportunities facing new farmers and ranchers in Virginia. A variety of topics are covered, including gaining access to farmland, capital, and determining marketing strategies. These topics and stories are designed to go along with the Virginia Beginning Farmer and Rancher Coalition Program's Whole Farm Planning curriculum. Over 20 videos are available on the Coalition YouTube channel.

Virginia Beginning Farmer and Rancher Coalition Program YouTube Channel, published 2012,
<http://www.youtube.com/user/VABeginningFarmers>

Product Type

Audio or Video

Description

Virginia Beginning Farmer and Rancher Coalition Program Website, Published 2011,
<http://www.vabeginningfarmer.aee.vt.edu/index.html>

This website is our "one stop" portal for VBFRCP resources, technical assistance, online social media, beginning farmer events, and whole farm planning programming.

Product Type

Educational Aids or Curricula

Description

Virginia Beginning Farmer and Rancher Coalition Program's Whole Farm Planning Module 1:

Niewolny, K., Vallotton, A., Kloetzli, C. (2013). Introduction to Whole Farm Planning. In Westfall-Rudd, D.M., & Niewolny, K. (eds.) Virginia Whole Farm Planning: An Educational Program for Farm Start-up and

Development. Virginia Beginning Farmer and Rancher Coalition Program. Virginia Cooperative Extension.

Product Type

Educational Aids or Curricula

Description

Virginia Beginning Farmer and Rancher Coalition Program's Whole Farm Planning Module 2:

Niewolny, K., Schmidt, K., Groover, G., Smith, M. (2013). Land Acquisition and Tenure. In Westfall-Rudd, D.M., & Niewolny, K. (eds.) Virginia Whole Farm Planning: An Educational Program for Farm Start-up and Development. Virginia Beginning Farmer and Rancher Coalition Program. Virginia Cooperative Extension.

Product Type

Educational Aids or Curricula

Description

Virginia Beginning Farmer and Rancher Coalition Program's Whole Farm Planning Module 3:

Westfall-Rudd, D.M., Grover, G., Callan, P., Howe, J. (under VCE peer review), Holistic farm management. In Westfall-Rudd, D.M. & Niewolny, K. (eds.) Virginia Whole Farm Planning: An Educational Program for Farm Start-up and Development. Virginia Beginning Farmer and Rancher Coalition Program. Virginia Cooperative Extension.

Product Type

Educational Aids or Curricula

Description

Virginia Beginning Farmer and Rancher Coalition Program's Whole Farm Planning Module 4:

Dorn, S., Nartea, T., Westfall-Rudd, M., & Smith, M.* (under VCE peer review). In Westfall-Rudd, D.M., & Niewolny, K. (eds.) Virginia Whole Farm Planning: An Educational Program for Farm Start-up and Development. Virginia Beginning Farmer and Rancher Coalition Program. Virginia Cooperative Extension.

Product Type

Educational Aids or Curricula

Description

Virginia Beginning Farmer and Rancher Coalition Program's Whole Farm Planning Module 5:

Hodges, S., Schonbeck, M., & Dorn, S. (under VCE peer review). Sustainable farming practices: Soil Management. In Westfall-Rudd, D.M. & Niewolny, K. (eds.) Virginia Whole Farm Planning: An Educational Program for Farm Start-up and Development. Virginia Beginning Farmer and Rancher Coalition Program. Virginia Cooperative Extension.

Product Type

Educational Aids or Curricula

Description

Virginia Beginning Farmer and Rancher Coalition Program's Whole Farm Planning Module 6:

Hodges, S., Schonbeck, M., & Dorn, S. (under VCE peer review). Sustainable Farming Practices: The Place and the Product. In Westfall-Rudd, D.M. & Niewolny, K. (eds.) Virginia Whole Farm Planning: An Educational Program for Farm Start-up and Development. Virginia Beginning Farmer and Rancher Coalition Program. Virginia Cooperative Extension.

Product Type

Educational Aids or Curricula

Description

Virginia Beginning Farmer and Rancher Coalition Program's Whole Farm Planning Module 7:

Wood, C., & Shelley, C. (under VCE peer review). Sustainable Farming Practices: Animal Husbandry. In Westfall-Rudd, D.M. & Niewolny, K. (eds.) Virginia Whole Farm Planning: An Educational Program for Farm Start-up and Development. Virginia Beginning Farmer and Rancher Coalition Program. Virginia Cooperative Extension.

Product Type

Audio or Video

Description

The Virginia Beginning Farmer and Rancher Coalition Program established a beginning farmer blog: "Virginia Beginning Farmer Connections"

"Virginia Beginning Farmer Connections" is intended to be a message board for topics that pertain to beginning farmers and ranchers in Virginia. "Connections" can serve as an active communication network for farmers, ranchers, educators, and service providers.

<http://news.cals.vt.edu/vabeginningfarmer/>

Product Type

Audio or Video

Description

Virginia Beginning Farmer & Rancher Webinar Series: Includes 20 webinar presentations on the topics of "access to markets," "access to capital," "access to resources," and "access to land."

<http://www.vabeginningfarmer.aee.vt.edu/webinar/Archive/webinar-archive.html>

Product Type

Audio or Video

Description

Virginia Beginning Farmer and Rancher Coalition Program's Facebook site. Includes 558 "likes" and events and outreach opportunities for Virginia Beginning Farmers and Ranchers

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Virginia-Beginning-Farmer-Rancher-Coalition/239686926056659>

Product Type

Audio or Video

Description

The Virginia Beginning Farmer and Rancher Coalition Project has established a beginning farmer listserv. The listserv acts (n= 471) as a message board for topics that pertain to beginning farmers and ranchers in Virginia.

The Beginning Farmer Listserv acts as a communication network for farmers, ranchers, educators, and service providers. Topics include, but not be limited to:

Questions that relate to farming needs.

Resources aimed at beginning farmers and ranchers.

Events and programs directed towards beginning farmers and ranchers.

Virginia Beginning Farmer and Rancher Coalition Program updates.

Product Type

Audio or Video

Description

The Virginia Beginning Farmer and Rancher Coalition Program established a listserv for agriculture service providers active in the Coalition Program to communicate about beginning farmer program events (n=154).

Product Type

Educational Aids or Curricula

Description

Virginia Beginning Farmer & Rancher Coalition Program's Technical Assistance and Resource Directory

The purpose of the Technical Assistance and Resource Directory is to help beginning farmers and ranchers in Virginia know what resources and resource professionals are available to them as they plan their new farm or ranch. The service and resource professionals featured throughout this directory are Coalition partners and are excellent points of contact for beginning farmers/ranchers and other service providers:

<http://www.vabeginningfarmer.aee.vt.edu/resources/vbfrcp-technical-asst-directory.pdf>

Product Type

Educational Aids or Curricula

Description

Virginia Beginning Farmer & Rancher Coalition Program's Beginning Farmer Profiles.

The purpose of the Virginia Beginning Farmer Profiles is to help beginning farmers and ranchers in Virginia gain knowledge about farm start-up and planning from first-hand, personal experiences shared by other beginning farmers. This educational resource is component of the Virginia Beginning Farmer and Rancher Coalition Program's Whole Farm Planning curriculum.

The beginning farmers featured throughout this document share their stories, candidly answer questions and provide helpful information, having all undertaken farming operations. From its illustrations, you will find that there is a lot to consider before or while initiating a farm enterprise.

<http://www.vabeginningfarmer.aee.vt.edu/resources/publications/profiles.pdf>

Product Type

Evaluation Instruments

Description

Virginia Beginning Farmer & Rancher Coalition Survey Final Report (2012)

The goal of the Virginia beginning farmer and rancher coalition survey was to identify the educational and resource needs of Virginia's beginning farmers and ranchers, as well as its agricultural service providers. The Virginia Beginning Farmer and Rancher Coalition Project survey was designed with direct input from Virginia beginning farmers and ranchers and the service providers, including members that are part of the Coalition. The survey instrument was finalized into a nineteen page document. The first two pages acted as an introduction to the survey with instructions for completion.

<http://www.vabeginningfarmer.aee.vt.edu/survey-report-july-2012.pdf>

Product Type

Educational Aids or Curricula

Description

Niewolny, K. (2013). Whole Farm Planning Best Practices for Successful Farm Start-up Training Manual. Virginia Beginning Farmer and Rancher Coalition Program. Virginia Cooperative Extension, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA.

This guide is written as a training tool for service providers to meet the following aims:

Become familiar with and make use of VBFRCPC resources, focusing on “whole farm planning” modules and online resources;

Develop skills and knowledge about specific teaching and learning approaches related to “whole farm planning” content areas;

Develop and implement program evaluations to ensure successful programming and reporting;

Build networking opportunities with new and established farmers through the VBFRCPC Farm Mentor Network; and

Utilize the VBFRCPC resource network for effective referrals, collaborations, and capacity building

Product Type

Educational Aids or Curricula

Description

Kloetzli, C., Vallotton, A., & Niewolny, K.(2013). Are you a Beginning Farmer? Virginia Beginning Farmer and Rancher Coalition Program. Virginia Cooperative Extension, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA.

One page decision tool and resource guide for service providers to use with prospective beginning farmers.

Changes/Problems

Changes/modifications to report:

First, as originally proposed, two farm mentor coordinators were scheduled to be hired during year one of the project. We hired one farm mentor coordinator during year one. Kelli Scott was hired to establish the southwest Virginia farmer mentor network in spring 2011. A suitable candidate, however, was not located for the second position. After a second position search in fall 2011, the second farm mentor coordinator was located and hired. Officially hired in December 2011, Charles Isbell leads the development and management of the farm mentor network in the eastern and central region of Virginia. As part of this second search in fall 2011, Jim Hilleary was also located as a suitable candidate who could support farm mentor networking in the northern region of Virginia. Upon confirmation and approval from the Office of Sponsored Programs at VT in January 2012, grant dollars were used to hire Jim Hilleary as a consultant at the Fauquier Education Farm to provide northern piedmont region farmer mentor network leadership and management. This project modification had a positive impact. The project had three successfully operating farm mentor networks as compared to the two networks originally proposed. Target number of mentors and mentee farmers were reached.

Second modification was also related to the farm mentor network. In April 2013, Kelli Scott, farm mentor coordinator for southwest Virginia, took a full time position with Virginia Cooperative Extension as an Extension Agent. Given that the project was within the last few months of duration, the project management team decided not to replace the position. With Virginia Tech's Office of Sponsored Program's approval, the management team provided Kelli Scott with a modest honorarium to continue providing mentor farmer coordinator support for the mentor and mentee farmers in her region on a limited time basis only. Despite these changes, Ms. Scott successfully supported and still supports the Virginia Beginning Farmer and Rancher Coalition Program as a new Extension Agent in her new capacity. Thus, this project modification had little impact on the project's ability to reach its farm mentoring goals; however, salary monies that were designated for this position were underutilized in grant budget which was unavoidable due to the timeframe in which this modification occurred (within 5 months of the end date).

Third project modification included the post-awarded sub-contract process administrated by the USDA: \$207,500 was designated for subcontracts to implement the Whole Farm Planning Curriculum. With assistance of the Virginia Tech Office of Sponsored Programs, a competitive proposal process took place within the Coalition at the beginning of year two. Seven teams were selected and confirmed by the Coalition in October 2011. Formal proposal narratives and budgets were submitted to the USDA via Virginia Tech Office of Sponsored Programs in early fall 2011. In late January/early February 2012, the USDA released the post-award sub-grantees. It was originally estimated that this subcontract funding would reach the teams in December 2011. As originally proposed, this timeline was fundamental in order for winter program planning and advertising to be impactful. Three of the seven whole farm planning teams were delayed in implementing their programs due to the delay in the administrative process. Despite a shift in timeline, all seven teams successfully developed their whole farm planning programs during year two and year three. To accommodate for this timeline, however, the project

management team provided WFP workshops during the winter months of year two. This proved positively impactful. These workshops reached new farmers statewide, while also building organizational capacity for Coalition members. These workshops also provided farmers the opportunity to join farm mentoring networks. Therefore, the modified timeline was deemed successful to accomplish beginning farmer education aims. However, due to the delayed timeframe, a small amount of post-award sub-grantee funds remained at the end of the grant period of performance (e.g., sub-grantee "program coordinator" wage category). This was unavoidable due to the fact that the updated timeline pushed back start dates of program coordination and implementation.