

<b>Title:</b>	<b>Building the Ccapacity through Training on Land Acquisition, Marketing and Business Strategesies</b>		
<b>Sponsoring Agency</b>	NIFA	<b>Project Status</b>	COMPLETE
<b>Funding Source</b>	Non Formula	<b>Reporting Frequency</b>	Annual
<b>Accession No.</b>	229471	<b>Grants.gov No.</b>	
<b>Project No.</b>	MASW-2012-00676	<b>Proposal No.</b>	2012-00676
<b>Project Start Date</b>	09/01/2012	<b>Project End Date</b>	08/31/2015
<b>Reporting Period Start Date</b>	09/01/2012	<b>Reporting Period End Date</b>	08/31/2015
<b>Submitted By</b>	Kelly Coleman	<b>Date Submitted to NIFA</b>	11/30/2015

**Program Code:** BFRDP

**Program Name:** Beginning Farmer and Rancher

**Project Director**

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**Recipient Organization**

COMMUNITY INVOLVED IN SUSTAINING  
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**Performing Department**

{NO DATA ENTERED}

**Co-Project Directors**

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**Departments**

{NO DATA ENTERED}

**Non-Technical Summary**

Beginning farmers in Massachusetts face a number of challenges in the first ten years of operation, including securing permanent or long-term access to land, scaling up their businesses, identifying new markets, assessing profit centers, and improving their business planning and marketing skills. According to a survey of participants in The Drake Forum on Americas New Farmers, the three biggest obstacles to new farmers are access to capital/credit, access to land, and lack of business planning and marketing skills (Drake University, 2010). Beginning farmers in Massachusetts consistently request technical assistance and support to help them address all three of these issues from the Buy Local organizations and according to a recent Beginning Farmer Survey performed by the MA Beginning Farmer Agricultural Alliance, agricultural knowledge and training was the highest need (BFAA, 2011). The additional targeted support offered as a result of this project would lead to greater long-term success for beginning farmers in Massachusetts and enhance food security for the region in the long run. CISA and our partners plan to address these challenges through a Standard Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program project to provide technical assistance and training on land access, marketing strategies, and business and financial management. To achieve our long-term goal of enhancing the viability of beginning farmers in Massachusetts who have been farming for less than ten years, CISA and our collaborators will: help beginning farmers diversify, grow, and sustain their farms in our region by improving their skills in **MARKETING**, and **BUSINESS MANAGEMENT AND DECISION MAKING** to achieve our goal of fostering strong and successful beginning farm businesses. This project will provide at least 75 beginning farmers with technical assistance. Participating farmers will improve their understanding of land acquisition options, the risks associated with new and existing markets, and the ability to mitigate those risks through improved marketing, business planning, and decision making skills.

**Accomplishments**

**Major goals of the project**

To achieve our long-term goal of enhancing the viability of beginning farmers in Massachusetts who have been farming for less than ten years, CISA and our collaborators will: help beginning farmers diversify, grow, and sustain their farms in our region by improving their skills in **MARKETING**, and **BUSINESS MANAGEMENT AND DECISION MAKING** to achieve our goal of fostering strong and successful beginning farm businesses. Workshops, tours, and demonstrations will reach up to 65 beginning farmers. CISA will host 3 workshops, tours or demonstrations. SEMAP will host 3, Northeast Harvest will host 1, Berkshire Grown will host 1 and Sustainable Nantucket will host 2 (plus Sustainable Nantucket will facilitate sending island beginning farmers to one off-island workshops). One-on-one assistance for up to 19 farm-trainer meetings serving approximately 15 beginning farms. CISA will host 9 one-on-one sessions a year, SEMAP will host 3, Berkshire Grown will host 4 and Sustainable Nantucket will host 3 a year. Five networking meetings will serve at least 30 beginning farmers. Each

organization will host one networking meeting. Written instructional materials and case studies for use in workshops and available directly by farmers in print and on-line. These will benefit 60 beginning farmers. CISA will create and host written materials on-line and share them directly with our collaborators. Use will be tracked through evaluations of beginning farmers and corroborated by web tracking software. Evaluations of our work will be performed at the end of the grant period with baseline research being collected in the fall/winter of 2012. CISA will provide evaluation tools for all partners and will provide analysis of evaluation results to share and review with partners.

### What was accomplished under these goals?

Our long-term goal for this project is to enhance the viability of farmers in Massachusetts who have been farming for less than ten years. To do this CISA and our collaborators have helped Massachusetts-based beginning farmers diversify, grow, and sustain their

farms by improving their skills in **MARKETING**, and **BUSINESS MANAGEMENT AND DECISION MAKING**. Farmers learned a range of marketing skills from choosing marketing channels and marketing strategies to social media and starting a CSA as well as a range of business management and decision making skills from assessing farm profitability to farm financing options (loans etc.). Peer learning was an important part of the program with opportunities for seasoned farmers to meet with and share their experiences with beginning farmers. 93 participants returned evaluations and 90% said the networking meetings, workshops, or one-on-ones they participated in meet their expectation or provided new information. 49 participants who filled out evaluations were asked if they would implement a new technique on their farm and 81% said they would or had already begun to as a result of this program.

Participants said:

"Learned a great deal this session!"

"This gives me a new perspective on how difficult it is to start this model with minimal capital."

"I knew some of the model info but hearing more specifics helps."

"a great workshop/talk."

"Helps me know where to go for more information"

when asked what they learned in a workshop one farmer stated "Too much to list."

"This one on one was the most helpful assistance I have had maybe ever. I am really interested in more one on one assistance more so than workshops in general. Everyone's business is different and I feel lucky if I leave a workshop with one piece of useful information. It was so great to have all of the pieces of information be useful to my farm."

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

In this period we provided four farmers with one on one assistance. In total, we have exceeded all of our major output numbers- we hosted 11 workshops, tours, or demonstrations aimed at beginning farmers. A total of 136 farmers attended these workshops. One on one assistance was provided to 29 beginning farmers by CISA and our partners. Four networking meetings were held across the state with 46 beginning farmers. A total of 5,080 unique pageviews were logged on CISA's online resources. Our resources to help beginning farmers find support received 164 unique pageviews, our information about grants and financing had 254 unique pageviews, our financial planning resources had 373 unique pageviews, and our marketing resources had 208 unique pageviews. Evaluations of all resources have been positive (see above).

### How have the results been disseminated to communities of interest?

Our project was not a research project -- it was a training project.

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

{Nothing to report}

### 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	0.1	0	0	0	0.1
Technical	0	0	0	0	0

**Actual FTE's for this Reporting Period**

Role	Non-Students or faculty	Students with Staffing Roles			Computed Total by Role
		Undergraduate	Graduate	Post-Doctorate	
Administrative	0	0	0	0	0
Other	0	0	0	0	0
Computed Total	0.1	0	0	0	0.1

**Student Count by Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP) Code**

{NO DATA ENTERED}

**Target Audience**

Our project essentially received an administrative extension to allow CISA to complete our indirect cost rate negotiation. During this time period we also continued to provide assistance to beginning farmers in the 0-10 years of farming range. We offered direct assistance to beginning farmers by partnering them with other farmers or experts, including staff, to address areas of concern for the farmer.

**Products**

{Nothing to report}

**Other Products**

{Nothing to report}

**Changes/Problems**

{Nothing to report}