

<b>Title:</b>	<b>South Dakota Beginning Farmer Training, Mentoring, Networking, and Marketing Support Project</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>	229263	<b>Grants.gov No.</b>	GRANT11010160
<b>Project No.</b>	SDW-2012-00662	<b>Proposal No.</b>	2012-00662
<b>Project Start Date</b>	07/01/2012	<b>Project End Date</b>	06/30/2014
<b>Reporting Period Start Date</b>	07/01/2012	<b>Reporting Period End Date</b>	06/30/2014
<b>Submitted By</b>	Frank James	<b>Date Submitted to NIFA</b>	09/30/2014

**Program Code:** BFRDP

**Program Name:** Beginning Farmer and Rancher

**Project Director**

Frank James  
605-697-5204  
fejames@dakotarural.org

**Recipient Organization**

DAKOTA RURAL ACTION  
910 4TH ST STE A  
Brookings, SD 570062170  
DUNS No. 627121296

**Performing Department**

{NO DATA ENTERED}

**Co-Project Directors**

{NO DATA ENTERED}

**Departments**

{NO DATA ENTERED}

**Non-Technical Summary**

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 (ERS, 2008). However, opportunities continue to grow in sustainable agriculture and local foods production and marketing. We expect at least 50% of our participants to be women as primary farm operators. This unique project is planned and organized by beginning and experienced farmers and ranchers. Beginning farmers and ranchers helped to launch the South Dakota Farm Beginnings program in 2009 as members of DRA's Small Farms Committee and Farm Beginnings Steering Committee. Two of the four members of the SD Farm Beginnings Leadership Team are beginning farmers; one joined the team after she graduated from the first course. Long-term, this project will improve the profitability and sustainability of beginning farmers who participate in the training, by improving their ability to plan and network with other sustainable farmers. The project will increase the number of beginning farmers starting, expanding, or modifying their operations, increase networking among beginning and experienced farmers, and increase net income for beginning farmer participants. The project will sustain and improve South Dakota's natural resource base by demonstrating a viable sustainable agriculture option for beginning farmers and ranchers. Outcomes: 1. Thirty beginning farm families will increase their working knowledge and skills in goal setting and values clarification, whole farm planning, financial planning, time & money, record keeping, sustainable farming methods, marketing, business planning, and connecting to resources. 2. Sixty percent of SD Farm Beginnings graduates will use their completed plan and new knowledge to begin, modify, or expand a farming/ranching business. 3. 30 will gain awareness of potential mentors, experienced farmers and ranchers who possess relevant skills and training to support participants' learning needs, and of opportunities in South Dakota to obtain land, equipment, or other resources by linking with farmers and ranchers. 4. 27 will form formal or informal mentoring relationships, lasting up to one year, with experienced farmers and ranchers who possess relevant skills and training to support participants' learning needs. 5. 25 will participate in skills sessions/farm tours, and indicate an increase in their hands-on knowledge of sustainable farming methods and successful marketing and planning strategies. 6. 57 will indicate use of the SD Farmer Network to connect to educational opportunities, employment, equipment supplies, seed, or other inputs; and/or land or equipment. 7. 36 will indicate that they have followed-up on opportunities for education, equipment, or land to modify, expand, or begin a sustainable farming practice. 8. 30 beginning farmer families will indicate increased awareness of local market outlets. 9. 27 SD FB participants will indicate an increased knowledge of how to market farm products through local marketing channels. 10. 11 beginning farm families will sell through a local marketing outlet. 11. 11 beginning farm families will increase sales as a result of these market programs.

**Accomplishments**

**Major goals of the project**

Goal - To increase the number of successful beginning farmers and ranchers in South Dakota engaged in sustainable, profitable farming operations. Objective 1 - Train thirty beginning farm families in whole farm planning, business management, value added marketing, and sustainable production methods through DRA's SD Farm Beginnings program, over two years. Outputs - Two 10-month Farm Beginnings courses, led by farmers, graduating fifteen family unit participants each course. Held during the winters of 2012-2013 and 2013-2014 Objective 2 - Increase success and retention of sixty beginning farm families by connecting them to South Dakota-based opportunities for farmland, equipment, supplies, internships, mentorships, partnerships and support through the SD Farmer Network. Outputs - 1- Minimum of six farm/demonstration tours throughout two years with average attendance of 10 participants each. 2 - A directory of beginning farming and ranching opportunities (land, equipment, equity, experience) found within DRA's membership and networks, and a list of needs (land, equipment, equity, experience) identified by Farm Beginnings participants (DRA Farmer Network). 3 - Lists of mentorship, internship, apprenticeship opportunities and matches with beginning farmers. 4 - Six face to face meetings of the Farmer Network per year. Objective 3 - Increase marketing success of eleven South Dakota beginning farmers by providing market support through multiple local food marketing initiatives. Outputs -1. Annual SD Local Foods Directory (2,500 paper copies per year and online version updated each year). 2 - On-line South Dakota Local Foods Buying Coop. 3 - Farm to School projects in two eastern SD schools.

**What was accomplished under these goals?**

In South Dakota the number of young farmers (under the age of 25, as primary operators) fell from 726 in 1997 to 178 in 2012. With 3775 farmers under the age of 44 compared to 15,069 farmers over 44 in 2012. (NASS Summary of Age and Primary Occupation of Principal Operator, 2012) However, opportunities grow in sustainable agriculture for younger and beginning farmers. The South Dakota Beginning Farmer Training, Mentoring, Networking and Marketing Support Project made significant strides in continuing to build a support and a positive climate for new sustainable farmers in South Dakota. In the past year, DRA has moved the Farm Beginnings course to Rapid City and held our first class with 15 families starting the class and 11 families finishing. DRA also expanded the Farmer Network to 100 members, focusing new recruitment on Western South Dakota members in order to support the newest Farm Beginnings Students. In addition, members of the Farmer Network have begun the process of expanding the SD Local Food Coop to western SD. One indication of the economic impacts this program is having comes from a recently published study from South Dakota State University, "Economic Impact Study of South Dakota's Local Food System: A Survey Study in Southeastern South Dakota". This February 2014, focuses on local food producers in eight Southeastern South Dakota counties. The study found the estimated sales was about \$4 million and the economic impact was estimated as being greater than \$6.5 million.

Goal 1 Objective 1: Train thirty beginning farm families in whole farm planning, business management, value added marketing, and sustainable production methods through DRA's SD Farm Beginnings program, over two years.

For the first time the Farm Beginnings course was held in the western part of South Dakota (Rapid City). Fourteen families began the course and 11 families finished the 10 week classroom training. Four participating families included a veteran and six families include a woman farmer. The previous year the class was held in Sioux Falls with 10 families finishing the 10 week classroom training. One graduate Kyle Cox, a veteran from Vale, SD, used the business plan he developed during the course to expand his sweet corn business by securing a loan for a corn roaster. The roaster allowed him to create a ready-to-eat product he marketed at the Sturgis motorcycle rally. Cox said, "I will be utilizing almost all if the class materials that were presented and I will be using the network of professionals in the future." In addition Kyle was selected by the Farmer Veteran coalition to participate in "Homegrown by Heroes", a marketing program designed to help veterans engaged in farming. A story describing Kyle and Homegrown by Heroes can be found at:

[http://rapidcityjournal.com/news/local/communities/newell/homegrown-by-heroes/article\\_952b95c9-ad88-5045-ba33-5b3e946e14a3.html](http://rapidcityjournal.com/news/local/communities/newell/homegrown-by-heroes/article_952b95c9-ad88-5045-ba33-5b3e946e14a3.html)

Goal 1 Objective 2: Increase success and retention of sixty beginning farm families by connecting them

to South Dakota-based opportunities for farmland, equipment, supplies, internships, mentorships, partnerships and support through the SD Farmer Network.

DRA's Farmer Network hosted 13 different field days, farm tours, or workshops. These events were attended by 196 total participants. In addition, the Farmer Network helped host a tour with NPSAS that included an over 100 participants alone. (Combined this is 14 workshops with 296 participants). Mentorships opportunities were offered to all 11 families finishing the 10 week Farm Beginnings Course.

The Farmer Network committee pursued a Land Linking campaign which resulted in 11 established farmers offering land linking opportunities. Additionally, DRA helped co-sponsor two Estate Planning and Farm Business Succession workshops, which were attended by over 20 people. In addition seven beginning farmers have indicated an interest in land linking opportunities.

The 2014-15 Farmer Network Handbook has been developed and distributed with 61 established sustainable farmer/mentors and 54 beginning farmers.

Goal 1 Objective 3 - Increase marketing success of eleven South Dakota beginning farmers by providing market support through multiple local food marketing initiatives.

Dakota Rural Action published the 2013-2014 edition of the South Dakota Local Food Directory in April of 2013. Over 2000 copies have been distributed. This edition includes over 150 listings.

Dakota Rural Action members continue to improve relationships with school lunch programs in South Dakota. The Flandreau Indian School and Woolsey/Wessington school district are two of the newest partners working with local producers to provide local food in their school lunch program. This was also the fourth year DRA sent out surveys to all of the school lunch programs in South Dakota.

DRA members have also been working with allies to build a local food hub in eastern South Dakota. This food hub will add additional marketing resources for beginning and sustainable farmers in eastern South Dakota.

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

{Nothing to report}

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

Results have been disseminated through the farmer network, the Farm Beginnings Collaborative, DRA's facebook, website and newsletter, house meetings and chapter meetings, and through direct discussions with interested people in a diversity of communities across South Dakota.

We have specifically been discussion the contents of our BFRDP program with members of the Standing Rock Reservation and Sifting Bull College. There's interest in some members attending the next planned class in Rapid City and expanding these programs to the reservation and college.

**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	0	0	0	0	0
Professional	2	0	0	0	2

**Actual FTEs for this Reporting Period**

Role	Faculty and Non-Students	Students within Staffing Roles			Computed Total by Role
		Undergraduate	Graduate	Post-Doctorate	
Technical	0	0	0	0	0
Administrative	0.3	0	0	0	0.3
Other	0.5	0	0	0	0.5
Computed Total	2.8	0	0	0	2.8

**Target Audience**

The target audiences for this reporting period include: veterans, native beginning farmers, women beginning farmers sustainable agriculture producers in South Dakota and consumers interested in purchasing their products. Our audience also includes a cross section of these groups that are interested in beginning farmer land transfers.

The efforts during this reporting period include a 20 session 88 classroom hour farm beginnings course, and 13 different field days, farm tours or workshops attended by 196 people.

**Products**

{Nothing to report}

**Other Products****Product Type**

Other

**Description**

Farmer Network hosted 13 different field days, farm tours, or workshops. These events were attended by 196 total participants. In addition, the Farmer Network helped host a tour with NPSAS that included an over 100 participants alone. (Combined this is 14 workshops with 296 participants)

**Product Type**

Educational Aids or Curricula

**Description**

DRA staff hosted a "Train the Trainer" webinar for Farm Beginnings presenters that prepared presenters to give excellent information, engage students, draw from their experiences, and utilize curriculum. This was attended by 12 presenters. After developing this webinar DRA shared the information with other Farm Beginnings Collaborative members at their Annual Meeting highlighting ways to better prepare and work with farmer presenters.

**Product Type**

Other

**Description**

DRA hosted two full Farm Beginnings courses, which engaged 21 families in two years. The courses combined provided a total of 20 sessions with a combined 88 hours of in-class instruction led by local farmer and ranchers and agriculture professionals. All classes were professionally video-taped and archived for student use in 2012-2013.

**Product Type**

Educational Aids or Curricula

**Description**

In 2014-2015 all sessions were streamed via go-to meeting for one student who took the entire class remotely. This also provided an opportunity for participants to join the session even if they couldn't be present in person that day.

**Product Type**

Educational Aids or Curricula

**Description**

Class materials include a 200 page course binder with curriculum for each of the sessions plus two supplemental books, including Fearless Farm Finances put out the Midwest Organic and Sustainable Education Services (MOSES) and Making Your Small Farm Profitable by Ron Macher.

**Product Type**

Evaluation Instruments

**Description**

Enrollment and graduation surveys were given each year. Session evaluations were given after every class. A Farmer Network usage survey was given in 2012 and 2014.

**Product Type**

Other

**Description**

From 2012-2014 the Farmer Network grew to 109 members. (the sequence of growth per year for the last four years is about 30, 50, 70, 100 members). Two Farmer Network Handbooks were published and disseminated to all Farmer Network members.

**Product Type**

Educational Aids or Curricula

**Description**

During this time frame, continued mentorship opportunities were offered to all 51 families who ever participated in Farm Beginnings.

**Product Type**

Other

**Description**

The Farmer Network committee pursued a Land Linking campaign which resulted in 11 established farmers offering land linking opportunities. Additionally, DRA helped co-sponsor two Estate Planning and Farm Business Succession workshops, which were attended by over 20 people.

**Changes/Problems**

{Nothing to report}