

Progress Report

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| Title: | Financial and Community Capacity-Building Among Latino Farmers and Ranchers in Missouri and Nebraska | | |
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| Submitted By | Christine Marston | Date Submitted to NIFA | 06/29/2015 |

Program Code: BFRDP**Program Name:** Beginning Farmer and Rancher**Project Director**

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Rural Sociology

Non-Technical Summary

The number of Latino farmers in Missouri and Nebraska appear to be declining at a point in time when the overall population of Latinos in each state is increasing. Across the US the number of Latino residents has risen dramatically in the last decade, registering 30% growth nationwide, compared to 4.7% for non Latinos. This was mirrored in Missouri and Nebraska, with about 44% Latino and 5.2% and 2.5% non Latino population growth. However, the number of Latino operated farms and ranches in these states stands in stark contrast to this trend: declining 25% and 37% respectively, between 2002 and 2007. A study of Latino farmers and ranchers in NE and MO found them to be highly motivated to engage in farming and ranching activities but are doing so without benefit of the established USDA support systems. The research identified language barriers, a high rate of rejection from farm support programs and farm management practices that do not optimize farm production or conservation. Latino farmers and ranchers often perform their farming and ranching activities isolated from formal institutions with little understanding of how USDA programs can help their enterprises. This project will enhance the farm viability of 72 beginning Latino farmers in both Missouri and Nebraska by increasing access to social and institutional support networks and by improving financial and production skills. This will be done in two ways. Access to social and institutions support will be improved by helping them develop a network of Latino farmers and ranchers, train them to understand the resource systems and networks available to them and develop the leadership capacity of Latino farmers and ranchers that can serve as bridges for others in their network to resource agencies. Improving financial and production skills will be enhanced through a 5 part training program and a series of production seminars designed to increase their financial management and production capacities to a level that will help them qualify for resource assistance from USDA. As a result of participation in the program Latino farmers and ranchers will be able to: 1. Effectively navigate their way in the community such that they are able to understand of available resources, connect to producer networks and access local resources. 2. Create networks of Latino farmers that are able to serve as bridges to local resources that can support them as they develop their farming and ranching operations. 3. Access and utilize USDA programs and other resources to improve their startup farming and ranching activities. 4. Develop enterprise plans suitable for FSA loan application 5. Understand and apply new production practices and understand markets Latino farmers and ranchers are becoming an important part of the agriculture production process. Developing the skills they need to improve their production practices, enhance their farm viability and increase their integration into the broader

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agriculture production system is good for the communities where these farmers are developing their enterprises and expands the production capacity and efficiency of the food production system.

Accomplishments**Major goals of the project**

The primary goal of this project is to enhance the farm viability of new Latino farmers in Missouri and Nebraska. There are two objectives with corresponding outputs. Objective 1: Community navigation: Increasing access to social and institutional support networks Project outputs will include: 1. Up to 5 workshops in each community that facilitates organizing, promotes an understanding of community resources, develops connections to producer networks and leads to greater access to resources. 2. A Curriculum established for limited-English-proficiency beginning Latino farmers that help them understand and access community resources. 3. Latino farmers and ranchers with a better understanding of community resources; with 72 farmers trained. 4. Latino farmers able to access and use USDA programs and other resources to improve their startup farming and ranching activities. We anticipate at least 28 requests to resource providers for access to services. 5. Individuals able to serve as "promotores" or community resources to other Latinos regarding how to access USDA and other community resources. We anticipate 6 "promotores" operating in two states. Objective 2: Improve farm financial and production skills Project outputs will include 1. Instructional curriculum on financial literacy and FSA loan programs for use with limited-English-proficiency Latino farmers 2. 15 FSA loan applications submitted in two states. 3. Training courses using the financial curriculum: piloted in each state in year 1, held four more times in year 2 and twice more in year 3. 4. 12 workshops over three years on production and marketing topics with 120 Latino farmers trained

What was accomplished under these goals?**What was accomplished under these goals?****Objective 1: Community navigation: Increasing access to social and institutional support networks Project outputs will include:**

1. In year 2 we conducted 4 workshops consisting of 4 leadership sessions each. The workshops helped Latino farmers and ranchers understand how to access and utilize community resources available to support their farming and ranching activities. The Latino farmers and ranchers who participated in the sessions were able to connect with local producers networks and associations of farmers. These leadership workshops were conducted in the fall of 2013 the Sprint of 2014.
2. A leadership curriculum for limited-English-proficiency beginning Latino farmers that help them to understand and to access community resources has been updated and extended. In this part of the project, we helped Latino farmers and ranchers learn how to access their current local community resources to improve farming and ranching activities. Each one of the 4 sessions targeted 4 different community resources.
3. Through year 2 of the project, we have been able to train an average of 27 Latino farmers and ranchers in Missouri and 24 in Nebraska. In year 2, we conducted a total of 48 sessions in Missouri and Nebraska, including 8 farms visits in both states. Latino farmers and ranchers who participated in the leadership workshops have stated that having direct interaction with community leaders that represent the resources in the community is helping them to grow trust and confidence in their ability to following up and complete applications with these resource organizations. We are excited to meet at least the goal of having 72 farmers trained by the end of this project.
4. Latino farmers able to access and use USDA programs and other resources to improve their startup farming and ranching activities. As part of the workshop literacy one financial educational session is oriented to helping farmers understand financial applications. The focus is on providing personalized assistance in understanding and filling forms to apply for farming and ranching resources. The most common forms they have showed interest are the Microloan and the EQIP Seasonal High Tunnel application forms. In year 2, we have brought a significant number of farmers (36 in both states) to the leadership sessions, where they met agents from USDA agencies. Multiple meetings between beginning farmers and FSA agents have occurred in both states, though no applications have been successful at this point. Beginning and aspiring new Latino farmers and ranchers have tremendously increased knowledge of FSA and the microloan program and are prepared to reach out to this resource in the future. While in Missouri 2 farmers have formally worked on microloans applications in year 2. In Nebraska no attendees have been reported yet. One factor that might keep Latino farmers and ranchers for applying is the lack of a registering number in their states. Most farmers and ranchers, who are served by the program lack an ID number required in the application forms. Business Literacy on having their farm registered as a business is a topic in the financial education part of the curriculum.

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5. Individuals able to serve as "promotores" or community resources to other Latinos regarding how to access USDA and other community resources. In year 2, four workshops consisting of 12 sessions in each state were conducted. During those sessions we were able to identify 2 potential promotores in Missouri and we are developing interest with one farmer to become a promotor with those participants in Nebraska.

Objective 2: Improve farm financial and production skills Project outputs will include

1. Instructional curriculum on financial literacy and FSA loan programs for use with limited-English-proficiency Latino farmers in year 1. After conducting the six sessions that constituted workshop 1, we analyzed the qualitative data collected at the end of each of the sessions. We asked open-ended questions to participants to better understand how to improve each session and make the content more aligned with their financial capacity to farm and ranch. At the end of year one and beginning of year two we made adjustment to each session of the curriculum to meet Latino farmers and ranchers profile. Consequently; in year 2 we were able to teach the workshops with a curriculum that included two parts: a financial management and a leadership part. Each workshop consisted of 12 sessions; six sessions were used to train financial and management capacity and 6 sessions to develop their leadership capacity to access community resources. The leadership part include 4 sessions where they met face to face with community agents and 2 sessions focused to make farm visits to expose them to other successful farmers production experiences.

2. The application for Farm Services Agency loans has been a challenge among most Latino farmers and ranchers. We have found that most participants in our workshops lack a farm business number registered in their state. After two years in Missouri, we have 5 applications submitted to receive farming resources, however; there has not a successful application yet. The lack of a state ID number for the farm limited their applications. In Nebraska multiple meetings between beginning farmers and FSA agents have occurred, though no applications have been submitted at this point.

3. In year 2 we conducted 2 workshops in Missouri and 2 workshops in Nebraska. Each workshop consisted of 12 sessions. We have been able to have a consistent number of participants on each workshop, however; the number of participants coming to each session has varied. We have had open sessions when 16 participants showed and then we observed inconsistency in assisting to all sessions. We had a more consistent participation in sessions when participants received a gift card as an incentive.

4. In year 2 we visited 8 farming operations of successful farmers in the communities where the workshops were conducted. In the Southwest MO region, we visited a dairy and a Livestock grassfed operation (15 participants). In central Missouri we made farm visits to a chicken and gardening operation (11 participants) and also we visit a horticultural operation with a seasonal high tunnel facility (12 participants). Two days of production sessions/farm tours were held in Nebraska following both the second and third series (the fourth is still in progress). Following the second series, 11 total participants attended the farm tours. Tours took place on a dairy farm, a vegetable operation, and a poultry operation. Following the third series, two days of production sessions/farm tours were held, with 14 total participants. Tours took place on a vegetable farm, dairy farm, organic grain processing center, and grass-fed beef operation. Topics covered on each tour ranged from production techniques to marketing strategies.

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

The project has shared its progress at the Cambio de Colores conference.

How have the results been disseminated to communities of interest?

We plan to share the results during year three.

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

We are on target to meet our goals for the project. We have another set of workshops to conduct and follow-up activities with the communities and the development of the promotoras. There will be more focus on sharing what we have learned from the project.

Participants

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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 | 0.2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0.2 |
| Professional | 1.8 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1.8 |
| Technical | 0.5 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0.5 |
| Administrative | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Other | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Computed Total | 2.5 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2.5 |

Student Count by Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP) Code

{NO DATA ENTERED}

Target Audience

The target audience reached during this reporting period were Latino beginning farmers in Missouri and Nebraska that have recently (within 10 years) started their farming or ranching businesses or they were aspiring new Latino farmers in Missouri and Nebraska who have not started their farming or ranching activities but were planning to do so in the next 2 years.

Products

| Type | Status | Year Published | NIFA Support Acknowledged |
|-----------------------|-----------|----------------|---------------------------|
| Conference Papers and | Submitted | 2015 | YES |

Citation

Eleazar U. Gonzalez, Jeanetta C. Stephen, O'Brien David. (...)"Exploring Beginning Latino Farmers and Ranchers' Willing to Become Involved in Community Activities in Rural Missouri."
Working paper.

Other Products

Product Type

Audio or Video

Description

A television broadcast was developed about the project and aired on news stations across Missouri.
<http://extension.missouri.edu/news/DisplayStory.aspx?N=1909>

Changes/Problems

One challenge to the program has been the consistent participation of the farmers. In the first year, the farmers received an incentive to participate and that helped keep them engaged across the program as the curriculum was developed. This year, the program is voluntary. Participation has been good but farmers tend to be picking and choosing the sessions they want to attend. We have had to make some revisions to the curriculum to make each session more stand alone.