

Title:	KYFarmStart II - A Whole Farm Management Education Program for Beginning Farmers		
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Program Name: Beginning Farmer and Rancher

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Non-Technical Summary

KyFarmStart II: A Whole Farm Management Education Program for Beginning Farmers is a Standard BRFDP renewal application for the KyFarmStart program, initially known as A Common Field, which was funded by a 2009 USDA Beginning Farmer Rancher Development Program Award. KyFarmStart II focuses on whole farm planning, while integrating production skills, marketing and risk management to enhance the long-term viability of beginning farmers. KyFarmStart II will adjust both the curricula and implementation style (based on stakeholder input) to make it even more effective than the original program. In addition, we plan to expand to beginning farmers with need specific interests. We will target to recruit participants with the following characteristics: women (30%), socially disadvantaged (30%), limited resources farmers (25%), farm workers (20%) and refugees (25%). Two groups identified by team leaders include refugee/urban farmer and dairy farmer groups. To reach out to these new target beginning farmers, we have partnered with the Community Farm Alliance, Catholic Charities, Kentucky Center for Agriculture and Rural Development, and Kentucky Dairy Development Council. Together, they will receive 20% of the budget directly, and will receive additional resources managed through the University. Based on the demographics of the current project and the refugee community, 31% of our clientele were limited resource and/or socially disadvantaged. We expect a similar proportion and will expend that same proportion of project funds on this demographic. KyFarmStart is one of a network of U.S. beginning farmer programs. The success of and demand for the original KyFarmStart program from participants, local county extension agents, and industry professionals has been powerful, speaking to the need to continue, expand and diversify Kentucky's beginning farmer program. Based on participant, extension agent and potential participant feedback, we will continue with the main KyFarmStart components while adding several alternative content options, expanding the online curriculum, providing network opportunities for participants, and utilizing our new partnerships to reach out to beginning farmers with both traditional and non-traditional agriculture backgrounds

Accomplishments

Major goals of the project

The three main objectives of KyFarmStart II are: 1) Provide beginning farmers with the education and experiences they need to make better decisions and develop successful and sustainable whole farm plans. Statistics show that 90% of beginning farmers are legally organized as sole proprietorships, and as such the daily business administration of the farming operation is done by the owner. As new business owners, beginning farmers need to have an understanding of not only the production challenges they are facing in their operation, but also of the financial challenges. If the farming operation is unable to succeed

financially, then the long-term viability of the farm will not exist. By giving beginning farmers the basic management tools of farm planning, record keeping, and financial management, it encourages them to look at the operation as a business venture and encourages them to make sound long term financial decisions for the farming operation. 2) Provide beginning farmers with skills and strategies to effectively manage risk. Giving farmers a better understanding of marketing opportunities and niches within their area of production, allows beginning farmers to focus their operation and develop a long-term plan with potential marketing outlets as components of the planning. There are significant challenges in developing a beginning farmer educational program. Our team as well as others have identified several challenges and successes of existing beginning farmer programs around the U.S. Beginning farmers tend to be very diverse in terms of their demographic characteristics, knowledge and skill sets. To reach out to Kentucky's diverse audience, the program will be designed to use benchmark characteristics as an assessment tool to classify beginning farmers based on their characteristics and needs. Benchmark characteristics for the financial condition, marketing and production practices of beginning farmers have been developed by one of our team members. Instead of providing a one-size-fits-all program, we will identify the critical areas for each beginning farmer. 3) Assist beginning farmers in understanding and using of, federal, state and local agencies and their services, with a particular emphasis on USDA-NRCS, USDA-FSA, and the programs available through the Kentucky Governor's Office of Agricultural Policy. Farmers have many opportunities to take advantage of environmental quality, access to capital, production, and educational programs through federal, state and local agencies. Many beginning farmers are not aware of the network of resource and programs, such as targeted loans for beginning farmers, available to producers, as they begin a new production operation or as their operation grow. By giving beginning farmers the resources and a network to access these agencies, it opens the door for opportunities now and as they become established farmers.

What was accomplished under these goals?

KyFarmStart: CORE Program

Kentucky's agricultural industry provides a diversity of opportunities and markets open to new and beginning farmers. Additionally, the farmer demographic continues to change across the Commonwealth. Kentucky has a growing diversity of full- and part-time farmers that focus on a wide range of production operations. To address this emerging audience, Kentucky launched the KyFarmStart program in 2009. The program reached more than 650 beginning farmers in over 50 Kentucky counties from early 2010 through mid-2015. 96% of survey respondents found the program useful and 62% had participated in other programs offered at their local CES office due to their participation in this program. 85% of survey respondents reported confidence in their ability to manage their farm business as a result of participation in the course. Statistically significant knowledge increases were reported in all 12 knowledge areas accessed, including: business goals and missions, legal considerations, financial documents, farm business plans, crop production, livestock production, government programs, soils, marketing, selecting a new farm enterprise, resource evaluation, and leadership development.

Subcontractor Final Report: Catholic Charities Refugee Agricultural Partnership Program

Project Activities: The Refugee Agricultural Partnership Program (RAPP) has been in operation since 2007. Because of the support from the KYFarmStart program, the RAPP Community Agriculture Educators (CAEs), Buddha Subedi and Khamisi Muya, have made a significant impact in the lives of refugee growers in Louisville. They have helped participants in the Refugee Agricultural Partnership Program increase crop yields, provide supplemental income for their families, and reduce food costs.

We currently operate 2 market gardens, 1 garden for refugee children, and 6 community gardens. We have a total acreage of 10.25 that is currently under production. We serve a total of 200 families. With a conservative estimate of 4 people per family we estimate that we are reaching at least 800 people each year.

By 2015 we have grown to 14 Somali Bantu growers. These are all people who had experience growing in Somalia before arriving in the US. During the winter months we conducted trainings with the 14 Somali Bantu growers who grow produce on our training farm. Eleven of our growers have received Good Agricultural Practices training from the Extension Office.

By the end of August 2015 we had sold over \$8,200 worth of produce. This averages out to \$600 per participant of supplemental income. Participants have reported that they are able to use this money to purchase school supplies for their children and make much needed car repairs.

In 2015 alone we saw the addition of 4 community gardens and 1 established garden doubled in size. An important addition was the gardens at Maplewood Apartments. Forty-five small plots allow for residents to grow food just out their back door. Over the period of the FarmStart grant we conducted a total of 64 trainings with growers more business management topics. See the table below for wholesale sales over the 3-year period; since 2013 we have increased sales by 64%.

Subcontractor Final Report: Kentucky Center for Agricultural and Rural Development

The Kentucky Center for Agriculture and Rural Development provided business planning training and one-on-one technical assistance for producers for the FarmStart program. KCARD provided business planning training for nine farm start groups across Kentucky and one-on-one assistance for 31 different beginning farmers during the program.

Beyond providing classroom training, KCARD provided substantial follow up assistance with participants outside of the trainings. KCARD helped several participants develop comprehensive farm business plans for their operations. This included meetings in person and phone conversations and further industry/market research to gather additional information in order to provide the best possible assistance.

Taking an idea and converting it into a profitable business enterprise is a challenging task, especially for beginning farmers.

KCARD helped FarmStart participants put the puzzle pieces together through a farm business planning process, which allowed them to make educated decisions about their ideas and gave them a better chance for success. Several of the participants have successfully launched and grown their businesses since completing the FarmStart program. KCARD is confident the training provided and business plans developed as a result of the FarmStart program are, and will continue to be significant contributors to the success of participants' various agricultural enterprises.

Subcontractor Final Report: Community Farm Alliance

Over the three-year grant period, KyFarmStart II has significantly advanced the issues of creating and supporting the next generation of family farmers in Kentucky. It has done this by 1) providing capacity to network beginning farmers, 2) Developing a collaborative network of resource providers, and 3) Directly connecting Kentucky's beginning farmers to resources.

KyFarmStart II has been instrumental in providing initial the capacity for the development of Community Farm Alliance's Agricultural Legacy Initiative (ALI) to help build a growing network of young and beginning farmers in Kentucky. Because of this initial capacity investment, CFA has been able to continue to build ALI funding support.

CFA provided 15 events specifically for Kentucky beginning farmers. 442 participants received formal trainings, met for network building or for collaborative action.

Agricultural Legacy Initiative organically grew our network of beginning farmers in 2014. The inaugural Field Day Program involved 375 farmers over the course of the year's events. These events have provided technical training, market building, and fellowship for beginning farmers. The Ag Legacy Facebook group gained 110 beginning farmers in 2014 and has added another 100 in 2015.

Subcontractor Final Report: Kentucky Dairy Development Council

The Kentucky Dairy Development Council, a 501 (c) 3, non-profit dairy farmer/allied industry organization. The KDDC hosted three statewide young dairy producer conferences, nine nutrient management workshops and six regional on-farm meetings along with three out-of-state farm tours over the course of the project period. Some of these events were financially supported by means other than the KyFarmStart project funds and are listed only as indicating a prerequisite to attend farm tours and also as a demonstration of achieving the "scope of work and project objectives".

Regional Education Sessions: The KDDC utilized regional educational on-farm meetings to facilitate more opportunities for dairy farmers to attend.

The KDDC partnered with the UK, Conservation Districts of KY, Division of Compliance Assistance, and the KY Farm Bureau to hold nine regional meetings to address water quality and nutrient management issues for dairy producers. Total attendance for the meetings: 140.

The KDDC hosted three young dairy producer tours to farms in Virginia and Tennessee.

SUMMARY: Although the impact of the KyFarmStart II grant may be difficult to measure, the funds have allowed the KDDC, as demonstrated, to provide more educational opportunities directly to young dairy farmers and those with a high interest in pursuing dairy farming careers. The KDDC has leveraged the KyFarmStart II dollars as a stepping stone to generate other support to touch more young dairy farmers. Had they not been available, the farm tours may not have occurred. The KDDC, as a 501 (c) 3 non-profit agricultural organization, must continue to seek opportunities like what is offered in the KyFarmStart II Program to prepare the next generation of dairy leaders.

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

Kentucky Farm Succession Seminar: Building Your Farm's Future. Multiple Locations, July 2015. The farm transition program was designed to address the steps, challenges, and questions associated with transferring a viable farm business to the next generation. Topics covered included farm profitability, identifying needs and wants of both the older and younger generations, preparing for the orderly transfer of assets, family communications, and emerging issues and trends.

Understanding the Cattle Market and Beyond, July 2015. Agent in-service training session offered in conjunction with the Center of Kentucky Beginning Farmer Beef Conference. County extension agents and clientele participated in a day long workshop focused on understanding the cattle market.

KyFarmStart: An Introduction to the KY Beginning Farmer Education Program. Louisville, KY, December 2010. Agent in-service training session offered in conjunction with the 2010 Kentucky Farm Bureau Annual Meeting. Seventy-seven ANR county extension agents attended the three-hour session designed to introduce the KyFarmStart curriculum, which included program design, website offerings, program dynamics, and pilot-county results.

How have the results been disseminated to communities of interest?

Evaluation data has been collected on all primary programming areas and will be analyzed and disseminated at the conclusion of programming.

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	2	0	0	0	2
Professional	1	0	0	0	1
Technical	0.5	0	0	0	0.5
Administrative	0	0	0	0	0
Other	0	0	0	0	0
Computed Total	3.5	0	0	0	3.5

Student Count by Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP) Code

{NO DATA ENTERED}

Target Audience

Kentucky's agricultural industry is unique in its diversity of opportunities and markets open to new and beginning farmers. In far western Kentucky, grain fields and poultry operations are industry leaders, while eastern Kentucky farmers are challenged with a landscape that has embraced timber and goat production. In Central Kentucky, farmers have found the land to be suitable for cattle, equine, vegetable, and berry production along with the new farming opportunities found in agritourism.

Along with Kentucky's diverse agriculture industry, the farmer demographic continues to change across the Commonwealth. Males over the age of 60 no longer dominate all farming practices. Instead, Kentucky has a growing diversity of full- and part-time farmers that focus on a wide range of production operations. The target audience for this project draws from a large pool of beginning farmers, estimated at 13,600. The majority are under the age of 45 with an estimated 14% being women and 6% being minorities.

Our participant demographic data confirmed the fact that not all beginning farmers are young. About 58% were under age 45 and 39% were between 45 and 75 years of age.

Historically, the tobacco enterprise was the path to beginning a farm. Young men would rent an acre or two, farm on shares and build capital and credit. With the loss of the tobacco program and move to contract production, this path is no longer workable. This creates greater interest in less traditional enterprises, but there is less of a knowledge base in the farm community -creating a demand for the expanded KyFarmStart II program.

The KyFarmStart II program was multifaceted. The CORE program, as well as the CFA Beginning Farmer Conference, KCARD programming, KDDC programming and the farm succession seminars focused on the target audience highlighted above.

KyFarmStart Enterprise/Cultural Specific

An insight from the original KyFarmStart program the identification of niche enterprises and cultural groups that needed a more focused curriculum, two such audiences:

Refugee/Urban

Farmers and the Dairy Enterprise. The barriers of entry for both of these audiences are significant, additionally, access to relevant teaching materials, which focus on the beginning farmer audience is limited.

Products

Type	Status	Year Published	NIFA Support Acknowledged
Other	Published	2014	NO

Citation

Ritchey, E. & Ditsch, D. (2014). Evaluating Land Resources in KY. University of Kentucky Cooperative Extension Service. Available at: <http://www2.ca.uky.edu/agc/pubs/AGR/AGR215/AGR215.pdf>

Type	Status	Year Published	NIFA Support Acknowledged
Other	Under Review	2016	YES

Citation

Meyer, L. & Isaacs, S. (in-review). Farm Basics: Is Farming for You? University of Kentucky Cooperative Extension Service, Department of Agricultural Economics.

Other Products**Product Type**

Audio or Video

Description

Interview with Ky Newsmakers regarding Farm Transition Planning and the importance of beginning farmer education

Changes/Problems

One problem was the lack of support for a conference planned for fall, 2014. The project had sponsored a well-attended conference in fall, 2013. That one-day conference was conducted with our partner NGO, the Community Farm Alliance. Based on participant feedback, we decided to offer a second beginning farmer conference, expand it to two days and offer field trips. We also moved it later in the fall to reduce conflicts for farmers selling at farmers markets. With a low number of preregistrations, we cancelled the conference and focused instead on monthly field days sponsored by the Community Farm Alliance's "Ag Legacy Initiative."

We also added three special workshops focused on the needs and interest of project participants. One workshop focused on the needs of one of the project's "special interest groups" - beginning beef cattle producers. That workshop focused on long term planning for beef cattle producers in a four county area. The other two special workshops focused on farm succession planning. As KyFarmStart progressed, we learned that the "next generation" beginning farmers (those part of an existing family farm) struggle with inheritance, communications and overall planning issues.

We conducted end-of-program evaluations on all three of these special workshops. Results indicated significant increase in understanding and knowledge. Participants also indicated that they would change their farm management behaviors by adopting improved strategies (typically marketing practices and initiating the succession planning process).