

Title:	Building A Foundation For New Farmers: Training, Resources, And Networks		
Sponsoring Agency	NIFA	Project Status	COMPLETE
Funding Source	Non Formula	Reporting Frequency	Annual
Accession No.	229566	Grants.gov No.	GRANT11010190
Project No.	CALW-2012-00749	Proposal No.	2012-00749
Project Start Date	09/01/2012	Project End Date	08/31/2015
Reporting Period Start Date	09/01/2012	Reporting Period End Date	08/31/2015
Submitted By	Daniel Press	Date Submitted to NIFA	11/25/2015

Program Code: BFRDP

Program Name: Beginning Farmer and Rancher

Project Director

Daniel Press
831-459-3263
dpress@ucsc.edu

Recipient Organization

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, SANTA CRUZ
1156 HIGH ST
Santa Cruz, CA 950641077
DUNS No. 125084723

Performing Department

Agroecology Program, Social Science

Co-Project Directors

{NO DATA ENTERED}

Departments

{NO DATA ENTERED}

Non-Technical Summary

The goals of this project are to prepare well-trained new farmers for sustainable production and small farm viability, to support these farmers in their early years of operation, and to build a mentorship and peer farmer network that will help ensure their long-term viability and success. The four partners in this project, the UCSC Center for Agroecology & Sustainable Food Systems (CASFS), the Ecological Farming Association (EFA), the Community Alliance with Family Farmers (CAFF), and the California Certified Organic Farmers (CCOF), will build on established farmer training programs to undertake several regional and national initiatives including: expanding farmer training opportunities at the CASFS Apprenticeship on the UCSC Farm; revising widely-used production and marketing training manuals for national dissemination as free online resources and at-cost print resources; and expanding existing and creating new mentoring and peer-to-peer support opportunities via workshops, field days, one-on-one sessions, and social networking tools. A special focus of this project is providing training and support resources to new farmers from socially disadvantaged and limited resource communities. The training manuals and farmer mentor recommendations are intended for use nationwide by CASFS Apprenticeship graduates and other farmers and farmer educators. This project will create the foundation to support new farmers as they ascend the learning ladder, from farmer-in-training, to beginning farmer, to part of a network in which they can become mentors for new farmers in their regions.

Accomplishments

Major goals of the project

This project builds on the strength of four Central California Coast collaborators to undertake three objectives: 1) Increase and improve beginning farmer education nationwide by updating, expanding, and disseminating proven training materials to groups supporting beginning farmers. By 2015 CASFS will update and expand two CASFS training manuals --Teaching Organic Farming and Gardening: Resources for Instructors and Teaching Direct Marketing and Small Farm Viability: Resources for Instructors--and again make them available to agriculture educators nationwide both as free online resources and printed manuals sold at cost. We will increase access to and knowledge of the revised training manuals through a dissemination effort targeting agriculture educators and groups that support beginning farmers, resulting in distribution online and in print to over 2,000 users across the U.S. by 2015. 2) Provide intensive training for beginning farmers from across the country, including socially disadvantaged and limited resource participants, through the six-month CASFS Apprenticeship Program and new Advanced Apprenticeship programming, and support graduates through an online mentorship. The CASFS Apprenticeship's training program will train up to 39 participants each year in the six month full-time residential program based at the UCSC Farm. At least 60 of the 120 beginning farmers trained in the Apprenticeship during the three-year project period will be socially disadvantaged and/or limited resource participants, with full or partial scholarship funding available to cover course costs. The new Advanced Apprenticeship course trainings will be given to 7 to 20 advanced apprentices annually,

resulting in a 12-month advanced course by 2015. The Grow a Farmer website (<http://growafarmer.org/>) will provide online mentoring for beginning farmers by 2015 through a farmer forum for CASFS Apprenticeship graduates across the country. 3) Coordinate California Central Coast beginning farmer education opportunities, including conference workshops, field days, and mentoring while developing a continuing education model appropriate for national dissemination. The four collaborating organizations will build on existing programming to create initiatives serving beginning farmers in the Central Coast region of California. Outcomes will include: a Beginning Farmer Network (BFN) of at least ten farmer service organizations offering a comprehensive annual calendar of beginning farmer workshops, field days and educational events for approximately 90 beginning farmers in California's Central Coast region each project year; six to eight beginning farmer educational workshops at the Ecological Farming Conference, serving at least 60 beginning farmer attendees annually, including 10 or more with full scholarships; On-farm support for beginning farmers through over 400 hours of mentoring, instruction, and technical assistance for 40 or more beginning farmers annually in California's Central Coast region, provided by a mentor farmer; and mentoring for 90 beginning farmers by 2015 through an online farmer forum, as well as a guide for replicating such services nationally.

What was accomplished under these goals?

Impact

The goals of this project are to prepare well-trained new farmers for sustainable production and small farm viability, to support these farmers in their early years of operation, and to build a mentorship and peer farmer network that will help ensure their long-term viability and success. The four partners in this project built on their established sustainable and organic farmer training and support programs to undertake several regional and national initiatives. This project has allowed the partners to expand farmer training opportunities for CASFS Apprentices and alumni; coordinate continuing education workshops in the California central coast; and expand existing and create new mentoring and peer-to-peer support opportunities via workshops, field days, one-on-one sessions, and social networking tools.

Workshops and trainings focusing on those preparing to farm and currently farming have helped increase knowledge substantially. Programs working directly with brand new farmers have helped many to farm either independently or work as a farm manager/worker (41% via Apprenticeship). For those already farming independently, mentoring has been an invaluable service to keep them on their farms and encourage them to continue the next year (77%).

Objective 1: Increase and improve beginning farmer education nationwide by updating, expanding, and disseminating proven training materials to groups supporting beginning farmers.

Teaching Direct Marketing and Small Farm Viability: Resources for Instructors (TDM) and Teaching Organic Farming & Gardening: Resources for Instructors (TOFG) were both completed and disseminated in the first half of 2015. As of October 2015, there have been 4,483 units viewed for TOFG and 1,545 for TDM. Impacts from the manuals will be evaluated in early 2016, after they have been in distribution for a year.

Objective 2: Provide intensive training for beginning farmers through the 6-month CASFS Apprenticeship Program and new Advanced Apprenticeship programming, and support graduates through an online mentorship.

To identify changes in knowledge, each student completed a self-assessment at the beginning and the end of the program. They assessed themselves on several skill items in 16 domains on a 5-level scale: no exposure; some exposure; some exposure and some competency; advanced level of competency; full competency.

Overall, all students in the six-month program had an increase in knowledge and skills (assessments were completed for 116 or the 117 students over the 3 years). Eighty-two students (70.7%) had an overall increase of at least one level (of the 5 described above). All students reported an increase in knowledge or skills. Additionally, all students reported to have at least an "advanced level of competency" by the end in at least one skill or one learning domain.

The advanced apprentices also completed the self-assessment. Overall, 20 of the 21 students reported increases in their knowledge and skills. Fourteen (67%) reported having an "advanced level of competency" (average score of 4) in at least 5 learning domains.

At the end of the program in 2014, 32 (68% of 47) intended to start their own farm in the future, which was a 5% increase from their intentions at the beginning of the program. In 2015, 25 (57% of 44) intend to start their own farm.

A follow-up survey of the 2012, 2013 and 2014 graduates returned 44 responses of 109 contacted (those with known emails), for a 44% response rate. Results show that the majority (84%) of those responding have used their growing skills in some manner after graduating from the program. Eighteen (41%) of these graduates have managed, operated, or owned a farm since graduating. Nineteen (43%) intend to own/co-own a farm in the future.

Objective 3: Coordinate California Central Coast beginning farmer education opportunities, including conference workshops, field days, and mentoring while developing a continuing education model appropriate for national dissemination.

The Central Coast Farmer Educator Network was successful in several realms, according to the members. It helped the educators better serve farmers by, a) conducting workshops they would not have otherwise done; b) learning about other organizations' resources, to better direct beginning farmers to the best place to meet their needs; c) collaborating more effectively, d) exploring best practices, and e) providing other funding opportunities.

Post-class evaluations were conducted in 15 workshops (237 respondents). These surveys showed that the majority of people's knowledge increased a great deal (63%) or a moderate amount (30%). These results were similar across the two years of the program in which they were collected. An end-of-project BFR Follow-Up Survey was conducted with those who attended any of the BFRDP workshops in the 3rd year, mentoring services, or were an EcoFarm Fellow. There were 42 respondents who had attended at least one workshop. Of these respondents, 39 (93%) are currently farming, 0 (0%) stopped and 3 (7%) plan to start. Thirty-four (83%) plan to farm next year. Twenty-two (55%) changed their production or business practices as a result of the workshop(s), and another 5 (12%) were unsure if they changed practices as a result. Nineteen (48%) said the workshop(s) influenced their desire to keep farming.

Survey data from the EcoFarm conference (2014 & 2015) show that BFRs (N=241) stated that the conference was outstanding or good at assisting them with expanding networks (83%), enhancing knowledge (84%) and improving technical skills (61%). In the BFR Follow-Up Survey, 48 people stated they attended the EcoFarm Conference. In this group, 34 (71%) are currently farming, 30 (63%) plan to continue next year, 20 (42%) changed their production or business practices as a result of the conference, and 33 (69%) said the conference influenced their desire to keep farming.

There were 31 BFRs accepted into the EcoFarm Conference Farmer Fellows program from the Central Coast that were given scholarships from this grant. In post-conference evaluations, these respondents reported that the conference provided re-affirmation, inspiration, information and important connections. As one person stated, "I have been in a transitional phase - and was influenced by many farmers, role models and connections to continue pursuing my passion in organic farming." Twenty of the 31 responded to the BFR Follow-Up Survey. Of these, 15 (75%) are currently farming, 2 (10%) stopped and 2 (10%) plan to start. Sixteen (80%) plan to farm next year. Seven (35%) changed their production practices as a result of the conference, and another seven (35%) were unsure if they changed practices as a result. Twelve (60%) said the conference influenced their desire to keep farming.

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

To help beginning farmers, the project offered a variety of support.

Objective 1: Increase and improve beginning farmer education nationwide by updating, expanding, and disseminating proven training materials to groups supporting beginning farmers.

The revised and expanded editions of both Teaching Direct Marketing and Small Farm Viability: Resources for Instructors (TDM) and Teaching Organic Farming & Gardening: Resources for Instructors (TOFG) were completed and disseminated in the first half of 2015. The purpose of the manuals is to provide professional development training to Beginning Farmer Educators, as well as provide training to farmers themselves. The manuals provide detailed lesson outlines, handouts, reference lists, activities and labs, for educators to use directly or adapt as they see fit. These resources could be used at a college farm, for example, as well as at a commercial or non-profit farm with interns and apprentices. Instructors and farmers can use the manuals as reading material as well for apprentices, students, or workshop participants.

Objective 2: Provide intensive training for beginning farmers through the 6-month CASFS Apprenticeship Program and new Advanced Apprenticeship programming, and support graduates through an online mentorship.

A primary offering was the yearly intensive residential 6-month Apprenticeship Program for 39 people from across United States held at CASFS. As part of their full-time course in organic and sustainable agriculture, the apprentices received over 300 hours of formal instruction and 700 hours of hands-on training and work experience in the farm fields, gardens, greenhouses, orchards, and marketing venues.

A 12-month Advanced Apprenticeship was also held at CASFS. This course combined formal instruction, hands-on training, and work experience, with an increasing emphasis on responsibility for operations in the farm fields, greenhouses, and marketing venues as the year progresses. Training focused on horticultural skills, crop planning, greenhouse management and propagation, pruning, and soil fertility management.

The Apprenticeship serves as a model for many other programs started by Apprenticeship alumni and for farmer educators who visit to gather information for their own beginning training programs. While we don't have a formal train-the-trainers program, our instructional staff does offer tours, advice, and instructional materials to other farmer educators.

Objective 3: Coordinate California Central Coast beginning farmer education opportunities, including conference workshops, field days, and mentoring while developing a continuing education model appropriate for national dissemination.

The beginning farmer educator network that started informally in 2011 was formalized as part of this project under the name Central Coast Farmer Education Network (CCFEN). The network offered quarterly meetings where educators have planned and coordinated courses, explored best practices, and contributed to grant development for further BFR educator professional development. The goal of these activities has been to improve education to beginning farmers.

A joint calendar of classes was created and hosted on the GrowaFarmer.org website for this group, which listed 205 classes in the past 3 years for project collaborators as well as other organizations.

A national Grow a Farmer website (growafarmer.org) provided alumni with postings for job and land offerings, connecting alumni with contact information, and providing a calendar, blog, and updates on items of interest like funding sources and opportunities for farmers. Special sessions were held to introduce the 2014 and 2015 classes to the Farmer Forum on the site.

Desiring and beginning farmers in the Central Coast region were served by an extensive amount of workshops and trainings. UCSC, CAFF and CCOF offered 48 trainings over the three years with 1439 participants (duplicated). There were 10 webinars, 24 workshops, 9 workshops with demonstrations, and 5 other activities (such as tours, pre-conferences, etc.). Some were open to the public and others were for already existing classes of new farmers. Workshops were conducted on topics including conservation funding and technical assistance, irrigation, cover crops, nuts and bolts, tractors and implements for the small farm, weed management, food safety, marketing, nutrient management and starting to farm. Workshops with Demos were conducted on topics such as equipment for beginning farmers, tillage basics, bed forming/planting, irrigation basics, setting up a 3-bar cultivator and welding. Webinars were conducted on topics including labeling, marketing 101, nitrogen budgeting on organic farms, breaking into retail, small farm financing and crop planning. Other trainings include a CSA pre-conference, a tour of San Francisco's wholesale market and a lab on appropriate equipment for starting a farm.

Additionally, there was a beginning farmer Track at the Ecological Farming Conference held each January. The goal of including 6 to 8 beginning farmer educational workshops at the Ecological Farming Conference was met each year. Over the three conferences, 28 workshops and 2 plenary sessions were offered. The number of participants in these workshops ranged from 22 to 160 (600 attended the plenary). Over the 3 years, the sessions focused on topics that would be beneficial to beginning farmers, such as marketing, finances, growing techniques, land access, certification, and business planning. Thirty-one limited resource or socially disadvantaged farmers were given full scholarships to attend the entire conference as well. Beginning farmer mixers were also held in the 2nd and 3rd years to help connect beginning farmers with local services, mentors and other more experienced farmers. On site mentoring drop-in hours were also held at each conference.

Other beginning farmers were served by Jim Leap's mentoring activities which included site visits and phone calls, as well as email responses to grower inquiries. Although it was planned that Leap would help students through the growafarmer.org farmer forum, that vehicle never quite took off. Instead he was connected to people through word of mouth.

In order to assist other BFR trainers in doing mentoring and workshops, Jim has written a document called "Personal Reflections from Three Years of Beginning Farmer Instruction and Mentoring." In this document he offers his thoughts on developing workshops and field demonstrations - including reflections on topic selection, promotion and organization, scheduling and coordination, structure, handouts, using PowerPoint and evaluations. Additionally, he offers his insights from doing one-on-one mentoring, and concludes with his observations of beginning farmer needs. A few key mentoring insights are that it takes time to build trust with farmers, that on-farm visits are invaluable to really help a new farmer by fully understanding the situation a new farmer is working within, and that continuing education is important for the mentors to stay up on current issues.

Additionally, the FEN created a document summarizing what was learned about collaborating with other organizations to better serve beginning farmers, for national dissemination. It is titled "Reflections on Running a Farmer Educator Network." This document highlights the context of how the FEN got started, how it operates, what was learned about successful operation, and what were the outcomes for participants. A few key learnings were to schedule the meetings a year out, set a time each year for all groups to discuss what kinds of education they are hoping to do in the coming year (to help reduce redundancy and increase cooperation), and have a consistent staff person organizing and running the meetings and group calendar.

How have the results been disseminated to communities of interest?

The training manuals and accompanying Powerpoints and videos were posted to the CASFS website (<http://casfs.ucsc.edu/about/publications/Teaching-Organic-Farming/index.html> and <http://casfs.ucsc.edu/about/publications/Teaching-Direct-Marketing/index.html>), where they are accessible free of charge. Since posting in January 2015, the website pages have received 5,264 hits (through November 10, 2015). The University of California's eScholarship site hosting the materials (scholarship.org/uc/casfs) has received 764 views and download requests. The manuals were also posted to the new Farm Answer site's library (farmanswers.org/Library) and information submitted to the Sustainable Agriculture Education Association's staff for posting. Links to the materials were added to the CASFS Grow a Farmer website (growafarmer.org). One-hundred-thirty copies of Teaching Organic Farming & Gardening: Resources for Instructors have been distributed for review by other farmer educators.

CASFS staff members made presentations on the training manuals and how to incorporate them into farming education projects at the 2015 Ecological Farming Conference, the California Small Farm Conference, the Washington State University's Cultivating Success Conference, and for Seattle Tilth Farm Works and affiliated programs.

CASFS staff also presented a webinar, hosted by grant collaborator California Certified Organic Farmers (CCOF), to 62 participants located throughout the U.S. An mp3 file of the webinar was posted to the CASFS YouTube channel (<https://www.youtube.com/user/casfsvideo>), where it has received 180 views as of October 28, 2015.

Press releases announcing the availability of the training manuals were posted on the UCSC News website (<http://news.ucsc.edu/2015/03/casfs-training-manual.html> and <http://news.ucsc.edu/2015/05/casfs-marketing-manual.html>). Press releases, book order forms, and email announcements about the availability of the training manuals were sent to approximately 1900 individuals, including: college farm managers, members of the Central Coast Farmer Education Network (FEN), farmer education NGOs, farm-based apprenticeship programs, alumni of the CASFS Apprenticeship, Master Gardener groups, and Extension offices. Information on the availability of the manuals was also distributed through various listservs, including UC Berkeley's Diversified Farming Systems and the Community Gardening Association.

Information on the availability of the training manuals and sample copies were presented to conference and event attendees via tabling at the 2015 Ecological Farming Conference in Asilomar, California, the California Small Farm Conference in San Diego, California, the Alumni Weekend at UC Santa Cruz, the Spring Plant Sale at UC Santa Cruz, the visit of the Focus Ag group to the UCSC Farm, the Strawberry and Justice Festival at UC Santa Cruz, the Agroecology World Fair Day at UC Santa Cruz, and on regularly scheduled tours of the CASFS/UCSC Farm for prospective Apprenticeship course members.

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	4	0	0	0	4
Technical	4.3	0	0	0	4.3
Administrative	1	0	0	0	1
Other	0	0	0	0	0
Computed Total	9.3	0	0	0	9.3

Student Count by Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP) Code

{NO DATA ENTERED}

Target Audience

The primary target audience for this project is beginning farmers, including those who are socially disadvantaged and have limited resources. The project is intended to serve beginning farmers on the Central Coast of California as well as a separate contingent of beginning farmers from across the country attending the CASFS 6-month Apprenticeship Program and 12-month advanced apprenticeship at UC Santa Cruz. The training manuals produced in 2015 have reached nationwide audiences, but for the project's three years all training and mentoring activities took place in the five Central Coast counties of Santa Cruz, San Mateo, Monterey, Santa Clara, and San Benito. Much of the training and instructional materials are based on organic production methods and sustainable agriculture principles, but outreach was conducted to beginning farmers regardless of production practices.

There were approximately 898 participants in the educational activities offered in the final year of the program, an increase from 732 in year one and 795 in year two. This number includes duplicated individuals. An unduplicated count of people

served can be closely estimated for year 3: 750 is the projection. It should be noted that these participants received trainings of various lengths, but 40 participants in a two-hour workshop were counted the same as the 40 full-time trainees in the six-month Apprenticeship Program who each received approximately 300 hours of formal instruction and 700 hours of hands-on training or work experience at the CASFS Farm & Garden.

The demographic breakdown of participants is as follows (includes duplicates). Demographic data was not collected at all education events. This data is for all 3 years of the project.

Gender data were collected on 1636 participants.
Women=759 (46%), Men=877 (54%)

Ethnicity data were collected on 973 participants
American Indian or Alaskan Native=11 (1.1%)
Asian/Asian-American=133 (13.7%)
Black or African-American=28 (2.9%)
Hispanic/Latino=176 (18.1%)
White/European-American=610 (62.7%)
Other Ethnicity=25 (2.6%)

Limited Resource information was collected on 475 participants (not using USDA criteria).
Limited resource=168 (35.4%)

Socially Disadvantaged information was collected on 1350 people
Socially Disadvantaged= 568 (42.1%)

Veterans' data were collected on 615 participants
Veterans=14 (2.3%)

The other target audience includes educators of beginning farmers. In the first year of the program, they were served through the beginning farmer network (called the Farmer Education Network). There were 34 people from the 14 Central Coast organizations who participated, and several others from a broader region of California. Women=25; Men=9.

Products

Type	Status	Year Published	NIFA Support Acknowledged
Other	Awaiting Publication	2015	YES

Citation

Leap, Jim & Martha Brown. 2015. Personal Reflections from Three Years of Beginning Farmer Instruction and Mentoring. Center for Agroecology & Sustainable Food Systems, Santa Cruz, CA.

Type	Status	Year Published	NIFA Support Acknowledged
Other	Awaiting Publication	2015	YES

Citation

Brown, Martha, Jan Perez & Jessica Beckett-Parr &. 2015. Reflections on Running a Farmer Educator Network. Center for Agroecology & Sustainable Food Systems, Santa Cruz, CA.

Type	Status	Year Published	NIFA Support Acknowledged
Other	Published	2015	YES

Citation

Brown, Martha, Jan Perez & Albie Miles. 2015. Teaching Organic Farming & Gardening: Resources for Instructors (TOFG). Center for Agroecology & Sustainable Food Systems, Santa Cruz, CA.

Type	Status	Year Published	NIFA Support Acknowledged
Other	Published	2015	YES

Citation

Perez, Jan, Martha Brown & Albie Miles. 2015. Teaching Direct Marketing and Small Farm Viability: Resources for Instructors. Center for Agroecology & Sustainable Food Systems, Santa Cruz, CA

Other Products**Product Type**

Other

Description

In 2014-15, conducted 6-month Apprenticeship Program for 39 people from across United States. In both 2012-13 and 2013-14, 39 people were also served. Overall, 117 people were served. Over half of these participants were socially disadvantaged or limited resource.

Product Type

Other

Description

In 2014-15, conducted the 12-month Advanced Apprenticeship for 9 graduates of the Apprenticeship Program. In 2012-13, 7 people were served and in 2013-14, 8 people were served. A total of 24 people were served by this program.

Product Type

Other

Description

Scholarship funding from the BFRDP supported 30 limited resource and/or socially disadvantaged students over the course of the program. Eleven apprentices received a full or partial scholarship in the six-month Apprenticeship Program in 2015. In 2014, 7 apprentices in the six-month program were served and 4 received scholarships for the advanced apprenticeship. In 2013, 6 beginning farmers received scholarships for the six-month program and 2 for the advanced apprenticeship.

Product Type

Other

Description

A national Grow a Farmer website (growafarmer.org) was developed, implemented and continued for past apprentices of the CASFS Apprenticeship Program. It has been providing alumni with postings for job and land offerings, connecting alumni with contact information, and providing a calendar, blog, and updates on items of interest like funding sources and opportunities for farmers. Special sessions were held to introduce the 2014 and 2015 classes to the Farmer Forum on the site.

Product Type

Other

Description

The Central Coast Farmer Education Network (FEN) served educators of beginning farmers on the central coast of California. Others from outside the region, with other BFRDP grants, also participated in three expanded meetings of the group in the past 3 years at the EcoFarm Conference. In 2014-15, 3 Santa Cruz meetings were held that served 22 attendees from 11 organizations. In 2013-14, 4 meetings were held that served 27 people from 11 organizations. In 2012-13, 4 meetings were held that served 22 people from ten organizations.

Product Type

Other

Description

Central Coast Farmer Education Network on-line calendar of workshops, field days, seminars, webinars, and other educational opportunities was launched in December 2012. During the 2014-15 project year (through August 6, 2015), there were 84 classes listed. During the 2013-14 project year, there were 79 classes listed on the website at GrowaFarmer.org/calendar. During the 2012-13 project year, there were 49 classes listed.

Product Type

Other

Description

Thirty-one fellowships/scholarships were awarded to beginning farmers (primarily for limited resource and/or socially disadvantaged) to attend the entire Ecological Farming Conference in 2013, 2014 and 2015.

Product Type

Other

Description

The Beginning Farmer Track at the Ecological Farming Conference offered 28 workshops and 2 plenary sessions at 3 annual conferences. These workshops focused on topics that would be beneficial to beginning farmers, such as marketing, finances, growing techniques, land access, certification, and business planning.

Product Type

Other

Description

Mentoring was a significant part of this project. The mentor farmer Jim Leap conducted farm visits upon request by beginning farmers to answer more specific and site-based questions. In 2014-15 he made 22 site visits to 13 farms and worked with 30 farmers. In 2013-14 he made 36 site visits to 21 farms and worked with 28 farmers. In 2012-12 he conducted 21 site visits working with 16 farmers. Over the course of the project, he conducted site visits with 48 individuals. Leap also responded to new farmer questions. He responded to the emails of 90 individuals in the course of the project, and even more with phone consultations.

Product Type

Other

Description

Forty-eight short trainings (two hours to two days in length) were conducted over the course of the project for those planning to farm or in the first 10 years of farming. These trainings include webinars, workshops, workshops with demonstrations, tours and pre-conferences.

Changes/Problems

Unexpected outcomes were seen in the 2nd and 3rd year regarding the assessment outcomes for the Advanced Apprentices. In both years, some students reported less advanced level of learning than the previous year. This finding was explored further with the students from the 2nd year of the project. Results showed they found that the more they knew, the more they were aware of what they didn't know. It got harder for them to choose the "advanced" category for their skills when they saw how far they had to go. We are assuming this is part of what happened for a couple students in 3rd year of the program.