

Title:	Building Sustainability for New and Beginning Women Farmers through Peer Learning, Farminars, Mentoring, and Networking		
Sponsoring Agency	NIFA	Project Status	COMPLETE
Funding Source	Non Formula	Reporting Frequency	Annual
Accession No.	229485	Grants.gov No.	GRANT11010995
Project No.	PEN04476	Proposal No.	2012-00705
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	Cheryl Mc Sweeny	Date Submitted to NIFA	11/10/2015

Program Code: BFRDP

Program Name: Beginning Farmer and Rancher

Project Director

Carolyn Sachs
814-863-8641
csachs@psu.edu

Recipient Organization

PENNSYLVANIA STATE UNIVERSITY, THE
408 OLD MAIN
University Park, PA 168021505
DUNS No. 003403953

Performing Department

Ag Econ and Rural Sociology

Co-Project Directors

Barbercheck, Mary
Brasier, Kathryn

Departments

Entomology
Ag Econ and Rural Sociology

Non-Technical Summary

The face of farming in American agriculture is changing, most notably through the steady increase of women farm operators. Women farmers comprise a diverse and often overlooked component of food and agricultural systems, and represent a significant proportion of new and beginning farmers. In Pennsylvania, the number of women principal operators increased significantly by 71% -- between 1997 and 2007. In 2007, women comprised nearly 14% of all principal operators. When multiple operators on farms were counted, there were 26,405 women farm operators in Pennsylvania, accounting for nearly one-third of all farm operators in the commonwealth (2007 Census of Agriculture). We propose to use a farmer-to-farmer network model that operates at multiple levels including the local, Pennsylvania regional, state, northeast and mid-Atlantic regions, and online to develop educational events and materials, networks, mentoring capacity, and partnerships. We will provide on-farm education, create farminars and on-line education, build mentoring networks, and build relationships with other partners.

Accomplishments

Major goals of the project

Long-Term Goal: To improve the sustainability of agriculture and agriculture-related businesses through the development of innovative educational programs and networking opportunities for new and beginning farmers. Our educational programs target women farmers, but are open to all. Women farmers represent an increasing but underserved segment of agricultural producers, especially new and beginning farmers (Census of Agriculture 2002, 2007). Supporting Objectives: To accomplish our long-term goal, we focus on meeting the expressed educational needs of new and beginning women farmers and supporting the development of networks through which new and beginning women farmers can gain technical information, business collaboration, and social support. We support our long-term goal by following four specific objectives: 1. On-farm education: Develop and deliver on-farm, hands-on, and participatory educational events for new and beginning farmers focused on sustainable production in three topical tracks: production practices, value-added practices and food security. 2. On-line education: Continue to improve and deliver participatory, interactive on-line curriculum in the program subject areas with the new addition of event-related "farminars" (our version of webinars), which strengthen our virtual learning community. 3. Establish mentoring networks: Develop the mentoring capacity of regional leaders to strengthen and facilitate the development of local mentoring networks. 4. Develop seasoned farmer mentors: Build leadership capacity and foster relationships between seasoned farmer mentors and new and beginning farmers. 5. Engage in organizational partnering: Enhance partnerships with non-governmental and governmental organizations as well as other new and beginning farmer programs to deliver educational programs and create information access for new and beginning farmers into the future.

What was accomplished under these goals?

Objective 1. On-farm education: Develop and deliver on-farm, hands-on, and participatory educational events for new and beginning farmers focused on sustainability in three topical tracks: production practices, value-added practices and food security. Six hundred eighty six people attended 29 field days. Seventy-five percent were women. The highest age group was 55-64 at 26% followed by 45-54 at 24% and 25-34 at 18%. Demographics were 87% white and 13% either Hispanic, Latino, Asian, Black or Mixed race. Attending to learn about farming and business practices was 91%. Those who percent attended to meet other women farmers was 32%. With 350 responses on surveys, 59% stated they improved their knowledge and skill on 7 or more topics; 30% improved on 4-6 topics and 10% on 1-2 topics. Only 2% stated no improvement. Eighty% of those already farming said they were moderately to very inspired. Forty-three percent of those not farming were moderately to very inspired. Of those, less than half plan to farm in the future. Respondents said they planned to stay in touch with people they met (77%) to provide or get business leads (29%), give or get technical information (53%) and to network (83%). Attitude about the subjects improved 45% from before the field day began to after the information was presented. Confidence about a topic rose in 3 areas from not too confident before (47%, 48% and 49%) to only 4%, 5% and 6% saying they were still not too confident after. Forty-five percent of people stated they intended to institute recommended practices on their farms.

The annual symposiums which focused on tracks in livestock, fruit & vegetable, business skills and advocacy or personal care brought in over 380 people in the past 3 years. Females were 99%. The highest age group was 25-34 years with 30%, then 45-54 years at 23%, 35-44 with 20%, 55-64 with 18%, up to 24 with 11% and 65-74 at 7%. Eighty-three percent said they met someone they would stay in touch with. The greatest reason was for networking at 65%, then to share technical information at 30% and only 23% for business leads.

Objective 2: On-line education: Continue to improve and deliver participatory, interactive on-line curriculum in the program subject areas with the new addition of event-related "farminars" (our version of webinars), which strengthen our virtual learning community.

Fourteen farminars were presented with a total of 220 viewers and 131 who visited the archived versions on the website. Respondents increased knowledge by 57%; confidence in skills by 51%; their value of importance of topics by 31% and planned to implement recommendations by 57%.

Objective 3: Regional mentoring networks: Develop the mentoring capacity of regional leaders to strengthen and facilitate the development of local mentoring networks.

We held 3 events with 68 total attendees. Carolyn, include the exercises you did from the engagement book you did last year.

Objective 4: Specialty farmer mentors: Build leadership capacity and foster relationships between specialized farmer mentors and new and beginning farmers.

We held 3 trainings for 15 people. The mentors had interaction with mentees through on-farm field days, farminars, phone, email, Facebook specialty groups and farm visits. Although impossible to count all contacts, there were over 500 mentor contacts with other farmers through all avenues.

Objective 5: Organizational partnering: Enhance partnerships with non-governmental and governmental organizations as well as other new and beginning farmer programs to deliver educational programs and create greater information access.

We added new partners Dickinson College, Wilson College, DCNR, PA Farm Link, Next Generation Farmers Advisory Group, PA Young Farmers, PA Farmers Union, BFLN, Philadelphia Urban Farming Extension, PSU Extension Agricultural Entrepreneur and Horticulture Teams, PA Dept. of Agriculture, NCAT, and Women and Their Woods.

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

We held 29 on-farm field days with 686 participants. Topics included:

- Organic Vegetable Production: From Seed to Field to Plate
- Whole Diet CSA
- Value-Added Goat Dairying
- Organic Vegetable Production and Heritage Seed Saving
- Animal Handling - PASA
- Education As A Value-Added Product
- Rodale Tour

Urban Farming at Joshua Farm
Transitioning to Mob Grazing
Organic Dairy and Mentoring for Transitioning Farmers
Assessing Honeybees for Overwintering
Managing Soils in Organic Vegetable Production
Spring Honeybee Assessment
Shiitake Mushrooms
Integrating Agritourism into a Whole Farm Plan
Understanding Hardy Kiwi
Day to Day Realities of Raising Sheep
Building Children's Gardens and Working with Youth
Transitioning to Organic Grain Production
Agriforestry in King State Park
Raising & Marketing Chickens & Turkeys
Getting Ready for Market: A Farmers Guide to Retailing
Tiller & Tools
Farmer To Farmer: Sharing the Land
Integrating Natural Health Care Into Your Herd
Annual Rodale Tour
Urban Poultry: Eggs, Fertilizer, Entertainment
Assessing Dairy Goat Health, body Structure & Nutritional Needs
Diversifying CSA Shares & Market Basket
Choosing the Right Breed for Grass-fed Beef Production: Highland Cattle

We produced 14 on-line farminars. The specialty mentors presented on topics from their farm experience. There were 3 livestock, 3 dairy/cheese, 3 fruit & vegetable, 3 value-added production, and 2 on-farm education farminars. Successfully recorded farminars are at <http://agsci.psu.edu/wagn/archived-faminars>. (This is not a typo)

PA-WAgN held 3 day-long intensive workshops: New & Beginning Farmers, Equipment Safety and Maintenance and Holistic Financial Planning. These were held in conjunction with PASA's annual conference.

Each December we held a one-day networking symposium with women keynoters: Judy Wicks (author of Good Morning Beautiful Business), Heather Retburg (Quill's End Farm), Lyn Garling (Over the Moon Farm) and Christine Anderson (producer of the film Terra Firma). There were sixteen breakout sessions each year covering topics within marketing and business planning; livestock production; fruit and vegetable production; value-added; health and personal care; and financial and production resources.

We held 3 professional development trainings for Steering Committee members. Topics were Assessing the Needs of New & Beginning Farmers, Leadership in International Agriculture (Wallace Center), Effective Steering Committees, Barriers to Communication, and Strategic Planning. In addition, 3 trainings were held for specialty mentors covering the use of Adobe Connect, how to compose good PowerPoint presentations, and engaging conversation with mentees.

Approximately 75 people attended 3 Twilight meetings held in partnership with the PSU Horticulture Team. Topics included tomato trellising, growing and marketing flowers and high tunnel IPM.

There were 16 regional events held by regional representatives and other members. There was a gathering covering maintaining fitness will farming in Dauphin Co.; 2 potlucks in Huntingdon Co.; 2 luncheons in Chester Co. with women farmer speakers; a gathering for new farmers in Cumberland Co., a potluck in Northumberland Co.; 4 gatherings in Montour Co. were members discussed marketing, made value-added products, made crafts and shared resources, 1 potluck in Dauphin Co., 1 potluck in Juniata Co.; 1 chainsaw workshop in Centre Co.; 1 gathering in Jefferson Co.; and 1 potluck in Schuylkill Co.

How have the results been disseminated to communities of interest?

Through on farm field days, on-line webinars, regional events, and professional training as noted above.

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	0.3	0	0	0	0.3
Professional	1.7	0	0	0	1.7
Technical	0	0	0	0	0
Administrative	0	0	0	0	0
Other	0	0	0	0	0
Computed Total	2.0	0	0	0	2.0

Student Count by Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP) Code

{NO DATA ENTERED}

Target Audience

Women farmers, new & beginning farmers, potential farmers, farmers who want to diversify, gardeners, consumers, agriculture professionals, women veteran farmers, women farmers of color.

Products

Type	Status	Year Published	NIFA Support Acknowledged
Books	Awaiting Publication	2016	YES

Citation

Women Farmers on The Rise in Sustainable Agriculture. University of Iowa Press.

Other Products

Product Type

Educational Aids or Curricula

Description

We held 29 on-farm field days with 686 participants. Topics included:
 Organic Vegetable Production: From Seed to Field to Plate
 Whole Diet CSA
 Value-Added Goat Dairying
 Organic Vegetable Production and Heritage Seed Saving
 Animal Handling – PASA
 Education As A Value-Added Product
 Rodale Tour
 Urban Farming at Joshua Farm
 Transitioning to Mob Grazing
 Organic Dairy and Mentoring for Transitioning Farmers
 Assessing Honeybees for Overwintering
 Managing Soils in Organic Vegetable Production
 Spring Honeybee Assessment
 Shiitake Mushrooms
 Integrating Agritourism into a Whole Farm Plan
 Understanding Hardy Kiwi
 Day to Day Realities of Raising Sheep

Building Children's Gardens and Working with Youth
Transitioning to Organic Grain Production
Agriforestry in King State Park
Raising & Marketing Chickens & Turkeys
Getting Ready for Market: A Farmers Guide to Retailing
Tiller & Tools
Farmer To Farmer: Sharing the Land
Integrating Natural Health Care Into Your Herd
Annual Rodale Tour
Urban Poultry: Eggs, Fertilizer, Entertainment
Assessing Dairy Goat Health, body Structure & Nutritional Needs
Diversifying CSA Shares & Market Basket
Choosing the Right Breed for Grass-fed Beef Production: Highland Cattle

We produced 14 on-line farminars. The specialty mentors presented on topics from their farm experience. There were 3 livestock, 3 dairy/cheese, 3 fruit & vegetable, 3 value-added production, and 2 on-farm education farminars. Successfully recorded farminars are at <http://agsci.psu.edu/wagn/archived-faminars>. (This is not a typo)

PA-WAgN held 3 day-long intensive workshops: New & Beginning Farmers, Equipment Safety and Maintenance and Holistic Financial Planning. These were held in conjunction with PASA's annual conference.

Changes/Problems

We added additional social media tools and social media training for the mentors in the last two years of the project.