

**2005 Annual State Plan Report to the  
Southern Region SARE Program**

**South Carolina**

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**UGA Subcontract numbers:** RE675-112/9820217 and RD309-055/9820257

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**Current Reporting Period:** January 2005 through December 2005

**SARE Funding Amount:** \$20,000

## II. Abstract

2005 was a transition year in which the South Carolina SARE PDP Program qualified as a Model State Program (MSP). MSP funding was received in early summer 2005 at which time the MSP Assistant Position was established. The MSP Assistant Position has greatly facilitated statewide training program efforts in collaboration with SC State (1890) Extension and the Carolina Farm Stewardship Association (CFSA). We have increased the number and diversity of stakeholders who provide input into the planning process for statewide training. We have expanded training opportunities for extension agents and other agriculture professionals by organizing workshops on specific topics related to stakeholder-identified training needs, and by providing travel scholarships for participation in additional local and regional training events. Training activities in 2006 will focus on the enhancement of new and existing small farm enterprises in South Carolina.

## III. Summary Report

*1. Briefly describe how your training efforts have addressed objectives in your SARE state plan for sustainable agriculture.*

**(a) Expand the existing strategic planning process for statewide sustainable agriculture development.** We have increased the number and diversity of individual stakeholders and groups who participate as members of the state Advisory Committee, and who provide input into the sustainable agriculture training planning process. An annual sustainable agriculture retreat was held in January to identify training needs and to schedule training events for the year.

**(b) Increase the number of Extension agents, NRCS, FSA and state Department of Agriculture staff and other sustainable agriculture educators who participate in the Carolina Farm Stewardship Association (CFSA) Annual Conference.** We provided travel scholarships for 10 extension agents and farmer-educators to attend the 2005 CFSA Conference and to participate in Conference workshops on various topics related to sustainable agriculture, and to participate in conference farm tours. This not only provided an opportunity for participants to gain knowledge and competency in sustainable agriculture, but also facilitated interactions and established relationships between agriculture professionals and farmers.

**(c) Continue to provide support for the CFSA Annual Conference.** We provided \$500 in travel support for Conference speakers who contributed expertise and information on topics relevant to the sustainable agriculture community in South Carolina.

**(d) Establish a process to recognize SC cooperative extension personnel for excellence in sustainable agriculture outreach.** We have developed criteria for a Sustainable Agriculture Service and Leadership award (one award per institution). The awards will be offered annually beginning in 2006 and will include a travel scholarship for winning nominees to attend a sustainable agriculture event to enhance their professional development.

**(e) Organize and conduct in-service training opportunities for Extension agents, NRCS, FSA and state Department of Agriculture personnel, agricultural educators, and for other interested persons as space permits.** Training events were held throughout 2005 according to priority needs identified at the January AC meeting (see training outcome summary under section 2 below).

**(f) Enhance professional development opportunities for extension agents.** Travel scholarships were provided for extension agents to attend the following events in 2005:

- Farmscaping workshop, Boone, NC (1 agent)
- Sunbelt Expo, Fire Ant Management Workshop, Moultrie, GA (1 agent)
- South Carolina Specialty Food Crop Working Group Meeting, Charleston, SC (4 agents)

- Season Extension Vegetable Workshop, Clemson, SC (2 agents)
- Small farm marketing workshop, Warren Wilson College (2 agents)
- Provided \$750 for one hand-held computer unit with GPS antennae and software for agent use in precision agriculture training

## **2. Provide bullet statements of training outcomes**

The following events were organized and conducted during 2005 with SARE PDP support:

- *State Sustainable Agriculture Planning Meeting and Retreat, January 22-23.* Meeting of the state Advisory Committee and stakeholders (75 participants). Training needs for the year were identified and training events scheduled.
- *Workshop: Season Extension Vegetable Production, June 10-11, Clemson University.* 58 participants (agents and farmers) gained knowledge of season-extension vegetable production and marketing techniques.
- *Sustainable Beef, Dairy and Forage Field Day, June 25, Wateree Farms, Sumter, SC.* 43 participants (agents and farmers) gained knowledge of sustainable forage and hay production.
- *Calhoun Field Laboratory Farm Tour, June 29.* 25 high school students and agents toured the Clemson University CFL organic farm and learned about organic farming practices.
- *Precision Agriculture Field Trip, July 5-7, North Alabama.* Five extension agents traveled to the Auburn University Belle Mina Research Center and neighboring farms where they observed how precision agriculture technology is being used to reduce on-farm fertilizer and pesticide inputs
- *Goat and Sheep Parasite Workshop and Farm Tour, July 16, Ovis Hill Farm, Timmonsville, SC.* Extension agents and farmers (45 participants) gained hands-on experience with new techniques for small ruminant parasite management.
- *Specialty Food Crops Workers Meeting, August 3-4, Charleston, SC.* This meeting was organized to formalize a statewide initiative to develop production and marketing techniques for high-value specialty food crops (23 extension personnel attended).
- *Poultry Processing Workshop, October 16, Broken Wing Farm, Honea Path, SC.* Hands-on training in on-farm poultry processing methods for 35 extension agents and farmers.
- *Compost Tea Workshop, October 18, Clemson University CFL Organic Farm.* Hands-on training in compost tea production and tour of compost tea tomato experiment plots (to evaluate compost tea for tomato disease control) for 35 extension agents and farmers.

**3. Briefly describe expectations for future sustainable agriculture training events:** As indicated in our Model State Program Plan of Work, the state Advisory Committee will meet with stakeholders in Columbia, SC in early February to identify and prioritize training needs, and to schedule training events for 2006. Based on preliminary stakeholder input, it is likely that 2006 events will focus on the needs of newly established, small-scale farming enterprises, and of conventional farmers wishing to transition to organic farming enterprises. An MSP Enhancement Grant will support extension agent training in organic crop and livestock production, and in National Organic Program standards for organic certification.