South Carolina SARE Program
2019 Open Forum and Advisory Committee Meetings
December 5, 2018
Clemson Outdoor Lab, Clemson, SC

PARTICIPANTS

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Open Forum Participants (in addition to AC Members)

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Overview of the 2018 SC SARE Program. Geoff Zehnder reviewed the SC SARE funding and planning process along with 2018 program activities and accomplishments, including training events organized by other organizations with SC SARE support. Top priority areas that were addressed in 2018 training events were:


- **Developing an Online Presence for your Farm Business.** (website and social media platform development). Full day SC New & Beginning Farmer Program (SCNBFP) event. 9am – 2pm March 13, 2018. Clemson, SC.

- **Managing Farm Labor.** (issues surrounding labor management in farming operations) ¾ day SCNBFP event. April 10, 2018. Greenville Tech College, Greenville, SC.

- **Summer High Tunnel Production & DIY Construction.** Full day workshop. (working in high tunnels with hands on construction component) April 12, 2018. Middleton Plantation, Charleston, SC.

- **Best Practices; Harvesting and Post Harvest Handling for Vegetables.** Two day workshop. (produce harvest and post harvest handling with train the trainer component on day 2). May 4th & 5th, 2018. City Roots Farm, Columbia, SC

- **Planning for Pollinators on the Farm.** Half day training. (importance of pollinators, planting forage, management) SCNBFRP and public event. May 10, 2018. Clemson Organic Research Farm, Clemson, SC.

- **Pros and Cons of Cover Cropping: Making Sense of Current Research and Past Experiences** Full day workshop. (researchers shared cover crop research with hands on component) May 17, 2018. Clemson Madren Center and Clemson Organic Research Farm. Clemson, SC

- **Understanding Cycles of Vegetable Pests and Diseases (and their interaction with the environment)** Full day workshop. (researchers shared insect management strategies with emphasis on lifecycles) August 10, 2018. Coastal Research and Education Center, Charleston, SC

- **Soil Health on the Farm; Concepts & Techniques to Assess & Maintain Healthy Soil.** Half day workshop. (basics of soil health) August 17, 2018. Clemson Organic Research Farm. Clemson, SC

- **Understanding Your Soil Test.** Evening SCNBFRP workshop. (reading and assessing soil test with tour of soil lab) December 18, 2018. Clemson Agricultural Science Lab. Clemson, SC

Other Program Activities in 2018

- Travel scholarships for Extension agents and other ag professionals to attend CFSA conference.

- Sponsor for SC Sustainable Agriculture Agent of the Year Award (Amy Dabbs)

Open Forum Discussion.
Discussion focused on the following category areas for training: Pest Management, Soil Health, and Other (discussion on Other included any additional topics pertinent to the growth of sustainable agriculture in the state).
Advisory Committee Meeting: Prioritized Topic Areas for Training in 2019.
Open Forum participants and Advisory Committee members reviewed topic areas identified in the Open Forum meeting and discussed priority topics by category. Members then cast votes for their top choice training topics to be included in the 2019 SC SARE training program. AC members were allocated 3 votes per category with one vote per topic.

**Pest Management**
- Conservation Biocontrol Practices (12 votes)
- Comprehensive Weed Management (9 votes)
- Cover Cropping/No Till for Pest management (7 votes)
- Invasive Species (plants & animals) (4 votes)
- Crop Rotations for Pest Management (4 votes)
- Organic Pesticide Application & Safety (1 vote)
- Changing Climate’s Effect on Pest Pressure (0 votes)

**Soil Health**
- Soil Microbiology and Effective Microorganisms (12 votes)
- Economic and Social Impacts of Soil Health Practices (11 votes)
- Soil Health for Climate Resilience (2 votes)
- Watershed Management and Precision Application of Fertilizers (1 vote)

**Other**
- Crop Production Planning; Succession Planting (10 votes)
- Integrating Grazing Animals into Production Systems (6 votes)
- Agritourism: Diversification Strategies for Farmers (5 votes)
- Equipment Cost Sharing (4 votes)
- Overcoming Barriers Between Growers & Market Outlets (4 votes)
- Disaster Mitigation for Farmers (4 votes)
- Industrial Hemp (3 votes)
- Farmer Mental Health (2 votes)
- Farm Record Keeping (1 votes)
- Perennial Row (Grain) Crops (0 votes)

Respectfully submitted: December 11, 2018
Kelly Flynn
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Overview of the 2017 SC SARE Program. Geoff Zehnder reviewed the SC SARE funding and planning process along with 2017 program activities and accomplishments, including training events organized by other organizations with SC SARE support. Top priority areas that were addressed in 2017 training events were:

- **Cover Crops for No-Till Vegetable Production** (for soil health and weed management). Two full-day workshops: April 19 in Charleston; May 11 in Clemson.
- **Understanding, Building and Maintaining Soil Health.** Organized by CFSA with support from Clemson Sustainable Agriculture. Full day workshop: June 1 in Columbia (City Roots Farm).
- **Disease and Insect Management in Vegetable Production** (non-chemical approaches). Full-day workshop: August 15, Columbia (Phillips Market Center).
- **Addressing Soil Deficiencies: Soil Testing, Cover Crops and Fertilizers.** Organized by CFSA with support from Clemson Sustainable Agriculture. Full day workshop: September 13; Laurens and Ware Shoals.
- **Tools and Equipment for Small-Scale Farms.** Full day workshop: October 9, Clemson.
- **Wholesale Success Training** (produce harvest and post harvest handling). Two, full-day workshops: November 9 at CREC in Charleston; November 11 at Clemson.
- **Produce Safety Alliance Grower Training Course.** Full day training. Hosted by SCDA and Clemson Extension and organized by Clemson Sustainable Agriculture. November 7, Charleston.
- **High Tunnel Production** (with emphasis on Ginger and Tumeric production). Full day workshop, November 15, Clemson.

**Other Program Activities in 2017**
- Travel scholarships for Extension agents and other ag professionals to attend CFSA and SAWG conferences.
- Support for the Cultivate Conference (Greenville, March 4). Registration fees provided for 20 participants in the New and Beginning Farmer Program.
- Sponsor for SC Sustainable Agriculture Agent of the Year Award (Millie Davenport)
- Tours and other educational events at the Clemson Student Organic Farm.

**Open Forum Discussion.**
Discussion focused on the following category areas for training: Pest Management, Wholesale Success, Cover Cropping, and Other (discussion on Other included any additional topics pertinent to the growth of sustainable agriculture in the state).

**Advisory Committee Meeting: Prioritized Topic Areas for Training in 2017.**
Open Forum participants and Advisory Committee members reviewed topic areas identified in the Open Forum meeting and discussed priority topics by category. Members then cast votes for their top choice training topics to be included in the 2018 SC SARE training program. AC members were allocated 2-3 votes per category.

**Pest Management**
- How to apply information on disease pathogen and insect pest life cycles in pest management planning (also influence of weather on pest and disease development) (7 votes)
- Selection of disease and insect resistant/tolerant crop varieties; application in IPM programs (6 votes)
- Soil pest and disease management (5 votes)
- Selection and application of pesticides approved for organic production (5 votes)
- Farmscaping; cost effective approaches for establishing beneficial insect habitat on small farms (3 votes)
Vegetable grafting for resistance/tolerance to diseases (0 votes)

**Cover Cropping**
- Integrating grazing animals into vegetable cropping systems through use of cover crops (e.g. grazing cattle on clover in the late fall prior to a spring broccoli/cole crop, or on spring alfalfa prior to summer squash, etc) (13 votes)
- Benefits and also limitations of cover cropping (deciding if cover cropping is appropriate for your farming operation) (6 votes).
- Cover crops as cash crops (2 votes)
- Basics of cover cropping for limited resource farmers (low cost approaches). (1 vote). **Gena Moore/CFSA may offer this training**.

**Wholesale Success**
- Harvesting, handling and grading a variety of vegetable crops in the field (hands-on with participants in the field and equipment demonstrations) (13 votes)
- Produce food safety (for FSMA) (8 votes)
- Succession planting of vegetables for increased profitability (0 votes). Zack Snipes may cover this in one of his trainings. Also, CFSA may cover this in their training schedule. This topic also identified in "Other".
- Networking with produce buyers (0 votes).

**Other**
- Small equipment repair (7 votes)
- Organic and non-GMO egg production (6 votes)
- Succession planting of vegetables (considering markets, seasonality and weather considerations) (5 votes)
- Organic grain production (3 votes). Rick Boyles could possibly schedule this at Pee Dee REC.
- Integrating perennial crops into farm production systems (3 votes)
- Farm market manager training focused on maintaining integrity of locally-grown programs (2 votes)
- Cut flower production (2 votes)
- Farm labor issues relevant to small-scale farms (2 votes)
- Industrial hemp production (1 vote)
- Irrigation systems for small-scale farms (1 vote)
- Small livestock production (1 vote)
- Transitioning from row crop to vegetable production using existing equipment (0 votes)
- Rabbit production and processing (0 votes)
- On-farm poultry processing (0 votes)
- Forage production and pasture management (0 votes)

Respectfully submitted: December 12, 2017
Geoff Zehnder
Overview of the 2016 SC SARE Program. Geoff Zehnder reviewed the SC SARE funding and planning process along with 2016 program activities and accomplishments including training events organized by other organizations with SC SARE support. Top priority areas that were addressed in 2016 training events were:

- Produce post-harvest handling ("Wholesale Success") training (Charleston and Clemson)
- Cover crops in no-till production for weed and soil health management (Charleston, Columbia, Clemson)
- Sustainable insect and disease pest management with focus on cucurbit crops
- Cover crops to attract pollinators and other beneficial insects (SARE cover crop conference in NC)
- High tunnel construction and use in season extension vegetable production (Charleston; CREC and Middleton Place Farm) (organized by Lowcountry Local First with support from SC SARE and others).
- IPM: Introduction, special topics and application (organized by CFSA with support from SC SARE and others)

Other Program Activities in 2016

- Travel scholarships for Extension agents and other ag professionals to attend CFSA and SSAWG conferences
- Sponsor for SC Sustainable Agriculture Agent of the Year Award (Zack Snipes)
- Teaching: Sustainable Agriculture and Food Systems seminar class at Clemson o Dr. Laura Lengnick visit for class and public lectures (climate change and agricultural resilience)
- Submitted SARE PDP proposal to continue Wholesale Success training

Open Forum Discussion. Stanley Green facilitating. Discussion focused on the following category areas for training: Pest Management, Wholesale Success, Crop Production, Livestock Production, and Agribusiness and Regulatory. Thank you Stanley for the outstanding job and thanks also to Diana Vossbrinck for help with the session organization and timekeeping!

Open Forum participants and Advisory Committee members reviewed topic areas identified in the Open Forum meeting and discussed priority topics by category. Members then cast votes for their top choice training topics to be included in the 2017 SC SARE training program. AC
members were allocated 5 votes per category. The training topics with results of voting are presented below:

**IPM Training**
- Comprehensive IPM training for important vegetable crop groups/families (i.e. solanaceous crops, brassicas, cucurbits, sweet potatoes). For each crop group, suggested topics include hands-on disease and pest ID and scouting, pest lifecycles and hosts, market relevant pest thresholds, use and application of OMRI approved materials, farming practices to encourage beneficials, preventative disease management, cultural practices for insect pest management including companion planting and trap cropping (9 votes).

**Crop Production**
- Small scale grain production. Topics would include organic and non-GMO grain production and pest management, specialty and value-added grains (brewers, bakers) (6 votes)
- Small farm tools and implements. Recordkeeping systems were also mentioned here. (6 votes)
- High density planting systems (profitability and benefits for specific crops, transplant vs. direct seeding for specific crops (5 votes)
- Soil Health. Sub-topics would include fundamentals of soil health, crop fertility management, on-farm production of biochar and use, composting and organic matter, benefits for drought tolerance. (4 votes)
- Greenhouse/high tunnel production (3 votes)
- Perennial cropping systems including commodity and forage crops. (1 vote)
- Training for owners of large scale farms who want to transition to more sustainable practices (0 votes)

**Livestock Production**
- Non-GMO based egg production; chicken tractor operations and management (2 votes)
- Rotational grazing and affordable organic forage and feed systems (2 votes)
- Integration of livestock and crop production (1 vote)
- Poultry production including quail/ pheasant (1 vote)
- Mobile slaughter (0 votes)
- Livestock waste recycling and mgmt; holistic parasite and disease management (0 votes)
- Best humane handling, processing and transport practices (0 votes)
- Basic swine production practices (0 votes)
- Goat production and management (0 votes)
- Value added meat processing (0 votes)
- Aquaculture (0 votes)

**Agribusiness & Regulatory**
- Farm labor issues: topics to include costs, regulations, insurance, housing for workers and interns, training and management of workers (8 votes)
• Food Safety Modernization Act/GAPs (1 vote)
• Farm finances: realistic business planning (1 vote)
• Marketing/branding (0)
• Farm Business 101/201: certifications, regulations, GAPs, SOPs, farm planning (0)
• Revisit small farms/big business (the study done several years ago) (0)
• Navigating land acquisition (0)
• Funding, grant applications, loans (0)
• Other topics receiving 0 votes: NRCS EQUIP programs in IPM; pesticide applications for greenhouse settings, orchard pest management, nematode management (on-farm biochar), and grazing systems for parasite control.

Post Harvest Handling
• "Getting it in a box": field packing, QC protocols, on-farm scalable infrastructure for packing, sorting, washing, cooling, storage and transportation (6 votes).
• Sales 101: Sales training, basic merchandising for market, how to set prices, selling cull vegetables, increasing dollar value for transitional crops (2 votes)
• Different market channels: i.e., product packing specifications for different market channels including farm to institution. Crop production planning for consistent supply (1 vote).

Respectfully submitted: December 9, 2016
Geoff Zehnder
OVERVIEW OF THE 2015 SC SARE PROGRAM

Geoff Zehnder reviewed the SC SARE funding and planning process along with 2015 program activities and accomplishments including training events organized by Lowcountry Local First with SC SARE support. Priority areas that were addressed in 2015 training were:

- Soil health management
- Small farm profitability and whole farm planning
- Ecologically based pest management
- Permaculture concepts and design
- Cover cropping for weed management
- Oil seed crops and on---farm processing of edible and non---edible oils
- Irrigation concepts and tools
- Biodiesel production
- Organic fruit and nut tree production
- Organic grain production and marketing

OPEN FORUM – DISCUSSION

Nikki Siebert Kelley facilitating. Discussion focused on the following category areas for training: Pest Management, Cover Cropping, Wholesale Success, and the "Other" category encompassing varied topics. Topics within the Pest Management and Cover Cropping categories were discussed and voted on separately because of existing funding for training on those topics. Topics within the Wholesale Success category were not voted on but recorded for consideration in planning for three trainings scheduled for 2016.

ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING – PRIORITIZED TOPIC AREAS FOR TRAINING IN 2016
Advisory Committee members reviewed topic areas identified in the Open Forum meeting and discussed priority topics by category. Members then cast votes for their top choice training topics to be included in the 2015 SC SARE training program. AC members were allocated 3 votes per category. The training topics are presented below in order of priority:

**PEST MANAGEMENT**
- Disease and insect resistant vegetable varieties (15 votes) 
  - Market demand vs. risk from pest damage
  - Planting windows to avoid pests
  - Rotation of crops to avoid pests/disease
  - Cultural practices
- Habitat for beneficial insects including pollinators (13 votes)
- Vertebrate pest control (8 votes)
- Management strategies for specific problem weeds (7) 
  - i.e. nutgrass, morning glory
  - Organic herbicides
  - Animals for weed control
- Nematode management for vegetable crops (3 votes)
- Appropriate products for organic pest control (2 votes)

**COVER CROPPING**
- Managing cover crops (14 votes) 
  - termination, planting date, economics
- Selecting cover crops and mixtures to serve multiple functions (13 votes)
- Integrating livestock into cover crop rotations (11 votes) 
  - winter grazing
  - rotating grazing land with vegetable production
- Alternative tillage practices (i.e. strip tillage, etc) (7 votes)

**WHOLESALE SUCCESS**
- Equipment/infrastructure for affordable processing
- Specific information on regulations and testing (water, state to state sales, etc)
- Curing of storage crops
- Procedures for selling to institutions
- Specialty crops best suited for wholesale vs retail markets
- Potatoes --- wash and cure
- Produce grading and sizing
- Packaging greens in bunches or boxes
- Focus on crops appropriate for SC markets
- Budgets for processing/handling (costs of different processes and packaging options)
- Recordkeeping; keeping track of handling and processing costs
- Compare low end vs high end processing in terms of costs and returns

**OTHER**
- Appropriate tools and implements for small farms (12 votes)
- Land access, estate and transition planning, conservation easements (6 votes)
- High tunnel production (success stories) (6 votes)
- Repeat tree fruit workshops (i.e. Pee Dee, upstate apple production) (5 votes)
- Best practices for greenhouse management including transplant prod. (4 votes)
- Coordinate with other groups to influence state policies related to small farms (4 votes)
- Aquaponics (3 votes)
• Interpreting soil tests and use/selection of soil amendments and cover crops (3 votes)
• "Farming after the Flood"; insurance, dealing with contamination, soil testing (2 votes)
• Farm to School (2 votes)
• Urban farming related to site selection on poor land (i.e. dealing with contaminated, poor soils) (2 votes)
• Helping conventional farmers transition to sustainable practices, higher value crops, etc (1 vote)
• Foraging for wild food (1 vote)
• Pasture and grazing management (1 vote)

Respectfully submitted, 12/22/2015
Geoff Zehnder
Overview of the 2014 SC SARE Program:
Geoff Zehnder reviewed the SC SARE funding and planning process along with 2014 program activities and accomplishments. Top priority areas that were addressed in 2014 training were:

- Pasture Pork Production
- Alternative Farm Energy Systems (several workshops on different topics)
- Best Produce Post-Harvest Handling Methods for Quality Assurance
- Farm Scale Permaculture Design
- High Tunnel Vegetable Production
- Insect and Disease Pest Management
- Tools for Small Farm Production and Weed Management.
Open Forum Discussion:
Diana Vossbrinck facilitating. Discussion focused on the following category areas for training: Pest Management, "Other" production topics, Food Safety, On-Farm Energy, and Farm Business and Marketing. **Topics within the Pest Management category were discussed and voted on separately because of existing funding for pest management training.**

Before adjournment, Open Forum participants were given an opportunity to identify specific training topics of critical importance based on the discussion. The following topics were identified:

- Organic/non-GMO grain production
- Seed production/saving for sustainable horticulture
- Legal issues and liability/crop insurance for small-scale farms
- Cover cropping including oilseed crop production
- Soil health

Advisory Committee Meeting: Prioritized Topic Areas for Training in 2015.
Advisory Committee members reviewed topic areas identified in the Open Forum meeting and discussed priority topics by category. Members then cast votes for their top choice training topics to be included in the 2015 SC SARE training program. The training topics are presented below in order of priority:

**Pest Management:**
- Cover cropping for pest and weed management *(6 votes)*
- Soil and environmental factors influencing weed management *(3 votes)*
- Vertebrate pest management (deer, feral hogs, birds, etc) *(3 votes)*
- Selection and efficacy of OMRI-approved pesticides and proper use of spray equipment *(1 vote)*
- Pest identification (i.e. farmer field school) *(0 votes)*

**Other Topics:**
- Organic and non-GMO grain production for livestock feed and specialty grain markets *(7 votes)*. **Sub-topics could include harvesting equipment, rotation of grains with other market crops, perennial grains. Could also include oil-seed crops and food-grade oil production.**
- Soil health including basic principles, understanding use of organic inputs, new soil testing methods, interpreting soil test results, NRCS cost share programs *(5 votes)*
- Nut and tree fruit grafting and production. **Stan McKenzie as a potential speaker (5 votes)**
- Wholesale Success training (food safety, post harvest handling, business management) *(5 votes)*
- Farm recordkeeping (tools, software, enterprise budgets, small farm profitability) *(5 votes)*. **CFSA has resources on these topics.**
- Irrigation technology and water conservation for small-scale crop and livestock production *(5 votes)*. **Topics could include water quality related to food safety**
- Writing a farm fresh produce food safety plan (participants leave training with plan) *(4 votes)*
- Integrating crop and animal production on the farm *(3 votes)*. **Sub-topics could include soil health, regulatory implications, farm scale permaculture including pollination habitat, pig and turkey production for nut-sedge control.**
- Market Ready/Retail Ready training *(3 votes)*. **(Could possibly be included with**
Wholesale Success Training)

- Labeling and regulations for selling animal products and for other value-added farm products (2 votes)
- Identifying and managing risk, insurance for small-farms (1 vote). NRCS, RAFl and FSA have resources.
- On-farm research and experimental design (0 votes)
- Sustainable landscape and nursery production (0 votes)

Respectfully submitted: Geoff Zehnder (zehnder@clemson.edu)
Overview of the 2013 SC SARE Program. Geoff Zehnder reviewed the SC SARE funding and planning process along with 2013 program activities and accomplishments. Top priority areas that
were addressed in 2013 training were Regulatory Compliance (how to navigate rules and regulations to sell and label farm products) and GAPs, Soil Health Management, and Ecologically Based Pest Management.

**Open Forum Discussion:**
*Diana Vossbrinck facilitating.* Discussion focused on the following priority areas for training: Pest Management, "Other" production topics, Food Safety, On-Farm Energy, and Farm Business and Marketing. *Topics within the Pest Management category were discussed and voted on separately because of existing funding for pest management training.*

**Prioritized Topic Areas for Training in 2014:** Advisory Committee members reviewed topic areas identified in the Open Forum meeting and discussed priority topics by category. Members then cast votes for their top choice categories to be included in the 2014 SC SARE training program. The categories are presented below in order of priority.

**Pest Management**
- Use of cover crops for weed management (annual and perennial crops): 12 votes
- Equipment and tools (weeding, cultivation, plastic culture, spray applicators, etc): 7 votes
- Control of emerging pests (i.e. new fruit pests like spotted winged drosophila, brown marmorated stink bug, etc): 6 votes
- IPM strategies for key pests in important crops (more comprehensive/advanced training on management of key pests): 5 votes
- Parasite management in livestock production (holistic soil health, cover/forage crops that can be used to manage parasites of livestock, etc): 4 votes
- Use of plastic mulch in weed control: 4 votes
- Selection and use of OMRI approved pesticides, including sprayers and calibration; 3 votes

**Other Topics**
- Application of permaculture design concepts and techniques in farm planning and operation: 10 votes
- Produce harvest and post-harvest techniques (handling and storage techniques to ensure high quality for specific markets): 8 votes
- High tunnel production (planting dates, disease and insect management, lessons learned, etc): 8 votes
- Pastured pork production (poultry could be included if feasible): 8 votes
- Best practices for food safety on the farm (common sense practices including worker hygiene, good recordkeeping, explanation of FSMA rules for farmers): 6 votes
- Repeat Wholesale Success training previously conducted by FamilyFarmed.org (Atina Diffley): 5 votes
- Training on regulatory requirements to sell animal products off-farm (meat, eggs, cheese, milk): 4 votes
- Black soldier fly composting systems: 3 votes
- Computer programs for farmers (i.e. programs for recordkeeping, etc): 3 votes
- Budgets for small, diversified farms; costs of doing business including marketing/sales, etc: 2 votes

*Respectfully submitted: Geoff Zehnder*
Open Forum Meeting Summary

Geoff Zehnder: Overview of the SC SARE Program funding and planning process

Participants

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<td>Walker Miller</td>
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<td>Weatherly Thomas</td>
<td><a href="mailto:wthomas@scda.sc.gov">wthomas@scda.sc.gov</a></td>
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Introductions: Meeting participants announced the following events and resources:

Events:
CFSA Midlands Farm Tour, April 6 and 7. http://www.carolinafarmstewards.org/mft/

SC Market Ready Training (training for producers on marketing strategies, profitability, risk management, etc.). Feb. 27 in Columbia and April 17 in Spartanburg. Contact Dave Lamie; dlamie@clemson.edu


Study Abroad Local Food Trip to France for students and non-students, June 20-July 6. Contact Dave Lamie; dlamie@clemson.edu

CFSA Annual Upstate Farm Tour; June 1-2. www.carolinafarmstewards.org

New Era Sustainable Farming Workshop; Oct. 10th, Clemson University Outdoor Lab, Clemson, SC. Program for high school students and teachers on opportunities in sustainable agriculture. Contact Diana Vossbrinck for more information. Diana@CarolinaFarmStewards.org

Irrigation and Water Management Workshop; March 14, Richland County. Contact Chanda L. Cooper; cooperc@rcgov.us 803-576-2084


Lowcountry Events. Many events are scheduled. For more information go to http://lowcountrylocalfirst.org

Resources:
Carolina Farm Stewardship Association: Regulatory Guides for North and South Carolina: A guide written for beginning and established farmers to help them understand the many federal and state laws and regulations that govern the production and sale of local foods.

Open Forum Discussion
Nikki Seibert – facilitating agdirector@lowcountrylocalfirst.org
(Send Nikki any info on events for posting on the LLF events calendar)

Top three training priorities from 2012 were: Food Safety, Produce Marketing and Packaging Strategies, and training in Soil fertility including interpreting soil test results.

Food Safety Training: Much discussion on food safety training (GAPs). Fred Broughton with SCDA is heading a Food Safety Task Force charged with coordinating training statewide. The next Food Safety Task Force meeting is March 5 at the Farmers Market in Columbia.

To date SCDA and partners have provided GAPs training for over 450 people. GAPs certification is greatest barrier for farmers wanting to access schools, institutions and wholesale markets.

Weatherly Thomas with SCDA has been hired to work one-on-one with farmers who want to get GAPs certification. She has helped 12 farmers achieve GAPs certification and is currently assisting about 45 additional farmers interested in certification.
CFSA has developed a practical manual to help farmers with GAPs certification. Will be available on the CFSA website soon.

**Regulatory Compliance.** There is a need to help producers with regulatory guidelines and product labeling. Scott Whiteside, Extension Food and Nutrition Specialist, is working with a team at Clemson to develop guidelines to help producers navigate food safety regulations and to help them find the appropriate regulatory agency for a specific product. They can also provide food processing assistance, including shelf life studies, food product testing, nutritional labeling, and more. [wwhtsd@clemson.edu](mailto:wwhtsd@clemson.edu)

**Farm Business Planning.** Devon Swindell with the Clemson Institute for Community and Economic Development conducted a highly successful 10 week farm business course in the Upstate (Next Level). Devon indicated that this training could be repeated in other locations if resources were available to cover his travel expenses. The need for training in micro-loans and financing was discussed.

**Produce Marketing and Packaging Strategies.** There was discussion on the need for training to help farmers who want to access wholesale markets. They need information on production and quality standards, and also need tools to help them make sound decisions about whether to access larger scale, wholesale markets. Post harvest handling and refrigeration also should be covered.

There is also a need to train farmer’s market managers on market operation, establishing standards, by-laws, etc.

**Pest Management.** Right-of-Way pesticide spraying on land adjacent to organic farms is becoming a problem. There is a need for awareness by public works agencies. Invasive species are becoming an increasing problem. Some felt that previous pest management trainings have been too technical; need for more practical, farmer-oriented information. Recruiting more farmer experts for training events would help with this.

**Advisory Committee Meeting Following Lunch**

Continued discussion from the morning session:

**Farm Energy.** There is a need to train farmers in alternative energy strategies, for example passive solar greenhouse heating, composting and digestion technologies to generate energy and value added products.

**Prioritizing Topic Areas for Training.** Committee members reviewed topic areas identified in the Open Forum Meeting and summarized into categories. Members then cast 3 votes for their top choice categories to be included in the 2013 training program. The categories are presented below in order of priority.

- Regulatory Compliance (how to navigate rules, regulations to sell and label products): 9 votes
- Soil Health (fertility, ecology, interpreting soil test results): 8 votes
- GAPs, Food Safety (Need for several levels of training: intro and more advanced training for farmers, micro-loans for farm infrastructure, traceability methods,
labeling, summit meeting of agriculture professionals to help coordinate activities): 7 votes

- Organic Pest Management (continue previous pest management training, target conventional growers interested in adopting IPM (not necessarily organic): 7 votes
- Farm Energy Alternatives: 5 votes
- Water in Agriculture (grey water usage, residential vs. agricultural use concerns, water resource conservation): 5 votes
- Marketing Training (accessing wholesale markets, tools for market analysis, training for market managers in planning, by-law creation, etc): 3 votes
- Funding (training on accessing funds, micro-finance opportunities): 2 votes
- Farm Business Training (repeat Next Level training, provide training for additional facilitators): 1 vote

Respectfully Submitted: Geoff Zehnder and Holly Garrett
Review of 2011 Accomplishments:
Geoff Zehnder gave an overview of Sustainable Agriculture Program activities and accomplishments. Powerpoint presentation available at: http://www.clemson.edu/sustainableag/about.html#planning

Advisory Committee member present:

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<tr>
<td>Amy Nichols</td>
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<td>USDA-NRCS</td>
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<td>Dan Parson</td>
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<td>CU MASTERS PRGM</td>
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<td>Kelly Gilkerson</td>
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<td>Nikki Siebert</td>
<td>LOWCOUNTRY LF</td>
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<td>Roland McReynolds</td>
<td>CFSA</td>
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<td>Scott Park</td>
<td>G'VILLE CNTY PLAN</td>
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<td>Shawn Jadrnicek</td>
<td>CU OG. FARM</td>
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<td>Walker Miller</td>
<td>FARMER</td>
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<td>Weatherly Thomas</td>
<td>REGIONAL F2S COORD</td>
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Open Discussion
CFSA is developing a Good Agricultural Practices (GAPs) food safety training program and food safety manual for small farms that will walk growers through the GAPs audit process.

Other needs related to GAPs that were identified include:
- Research to develop GAPs strategies for small, sustainable farms
- Need to integrate GAPs with organic farming practices
- Develop self-audit tools for small farms
- Need to coordinate statewide GAPs training efforts (Clemson, SCDA, etc)

There is a need to coordinate state regulatory agency activities to make it easier for milk and cheese producers to obtain the necessary approvals for production and sales of these products (i.e., DHEC and SCDA have regulatory responsibility for milk and cheese, respectively). It was recommended that this issue be brought to the attention of the state Interagency Food Safety Council at one of their quarterly meetings.

There is a need to identify regulatory barriers for small-scale poultry production, and then to communicate needs to state legislators. For example, North Carolina legislators raised
the maximum 1,000 bird limit to 20,000 birds (exempt from regulation). It was recommended that this topic be covered in a panel discussion at the upcoming CFSA Conference.

There is a need for research on sustainable pasture management for livestock, including research on parasite management and mob grazing. Kentucky State University has done research on small ruminant grazing including on specific cover crops to manage parasites. Kevin Campbell mentioned his Grass Masters Class to be held in Aiken in March that will cover some if not all of these topics. Chad Bishop mentioned a need to identify livestock producers who can raise calves for other pasture livestock producers who can finish the livestock for processing.

There is a need for local resources of non-GMO feed for livestock producers, including more information on non-traditional grains that were used before corn and soybeans became the primary feedstocks.

Water was identified as a limiting resource for sustainable agriculture, along with a need to involve farmers in water use reporting. Cal Sawyer with the Clemson Center for Watershed Excellence was mentioned as a resource on water issues.

There is a need to help farmers interpret soil test results to implement sustainable soil and fertility management programs.

There is a need to train farmers in produce quality standards and packaging, particularly for wholesale markets.

There is a need for perennial and small fruit pest management research and training programs. Specifically, helping farmers develop strategies to avoid pest problems before they occur. Also, a need to develop and evaluate organic pesticides.

**Advisory Committee Meeting to Prioritize Areas for Training**

AC members present:

The following topics were identified as priorities for training:

**GAPs.** Helping farmers develop food safety plans. Several groups have done/are doing GAPs training including Clemson (Sustainable Ag Program and Roger Francis) and SCDA (Fred Broughton is coordinating a Food Safety Education program). There is a need to coordinate efforts.

**Regulatory Agency Workshop.** Include Clemson Animal and Poultry Health, SCDA and DHEC. Organize a panel discussion in conjunction with the CFSA Conference.

**Pest Management for Perennial Fruit Crops.** Involve regional pest management experts (i.e. Curt Rohm from Arkansas).

**Workshop on Organic Pesticides.** Include information on pesticide applicator training and sprayer equipment. Include Clemson Dept. of Plant Industry regulatory personnel.
Sustainable Livestock Production

- Grass Masters Class; Kevin Campbell can organize additional classes with support from the program. Matthew Burns and Lee Van Vlake with Clemson Extension are potential instructors on sustainable cattle management and goat production, respectively.
- Training in Soil Ecology with NRCS instructors

Organic/non-GMO Grain Production (Chris Reeburg-Horton with NCSU is a potential instructor)

Soil and Water Quality. Helping growers to interpret soil test results for sustainable/organic soil quality management. Dara Park with Clemson is a potential instructor.

On-Farm Energy Training for NRCS and Extension Personnel. NRCS does energy audits. Harry Crissy with Clemson is a trained auditor.

Following discussion, committee members voted for three priority areas with the following results:

7 Votes: Development of a coordinated approach to GAPs training. Fred Broughton indicated that he would organize a meeting/conference call with people currently involved in GAPs training to develop a plan to coordinate efforts (i.e. identify specific needs related to GAPs and groups/individuals best suited to conduct the training).

5 Votes: Training on how to interpret soil test results in order to develop a sustainable/organic soil and fertility management plan.

5 Votes: Effective produce marketing and packaging strategies.

3 Votes: Sustainable/organic pest management for perennial fruit crops

3 Votes: Training for Extension on the broader concepts of sustainability to help them better communicate with farmers

3 Votes: Organize additional Grass Masters classes (Kevin Campbell)

3 Votes: On-farm energy efficiency

2 Votes: Organic grain production

Respectfully submitted,
Kelly Gilkerson
2/20/12
South Carolina Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SC SARE) Program
2011 OPEN FORUM AND ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING
Saturday, January 29, 2011
Sandhill Research and Education Center Lake House
Columbia, SC

MEETING NOTES

Welcome and Introduction Geoff Zehnder, Clemson Sustainable Agriculture Program. Overview of the SARE funding mechanism, the SC Model State Program and 2010 activity highlights. PowerPoint presentation available at http://www.clemson.edu/sustainableag/about.html

Advisory Committee Members Present

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<tr>
<th>Name</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alvarez, Sharon</td>
<td>Farmer</td>
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<td>Atkinson, Stacy</td>
<td>Farmer, Lone Palmetto Farms, LLC</td>
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<td>Beak, Elizabeth</td>
<td>Lowcountry Local First</td>
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<td>Bradley, Linda</td>
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<td>Zehnder, Geoff</td>
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Discussion on Training Topics for 2011. During the group discussion the following training topics were recommended for development given available resources (Listed in priority order, highest first).

- USDA Good Agricultural Practices and food safety training to address Food Safety Modernization Act impact on small, organic farms. Need programs to help small, organic farmers develop cost-effective food safety practices.
  - Develop and submit an OREI proposal using SC organic farms as case studies
o Develop a flow chart and fact sheet to help livestock growers to identify the appropriate agencies responsible for beef, poultry and egg processing regulations.

- Livestock Training
  o CCL Mobile Processing
  o Pasture/Fertility Management
  o Value Added Food Safety
    - Raw milk
    - Cheese
  o Herd Management
    - Parasites
    - Heritage breeds (ALBC)

- Soil Quality Management
  o Water conservation
  o Biochar

- Regional Pest Management Trainings

- Land Use Regulation/Farm Transition
  o NC Vol. Ag Districts (NCDA)

The followings topics were considered for training but were not considered high priority
- Agritourism
- Heirloom vegetables
- Edible Landscape
  - Nuts, etc.
- Community Food System
  - Development
    - Coordination
  - Community food assessments

As a next step, Geoff Zehnder will develop the OREI food safety proposal with collaborators and a plan for workshops and trainings for 2011 based on the recommendations of the SC Advisory Committee.

Respectfully submitted,
Kelly Gilkerson
February 7, 2011
kgilker@clemson.edu
SC SARE ADVISORY MEETING
Saturday, January 30, 2010
Hilton Columbia Center- Columbia, SC

MEETING MINUTES

8:30 till 9:00 am- Check-in and coffee and pastries provided by the Hilton Columbia Center.

OPENING SESSION

Welcome and Introduction
Geoff Zehnder, Clemson Sustainable Agriculture Program. Overview of the SARE funding mechanism, the SC Model State Program and 2009 Program accomplishments. PowerPoint presentation available at www.clemson.edu/sustainableag.

2010-2011 SC SARE Advisory Committee Members

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<td>Farmer</td>
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Advisory Committee Members Present
Allison Schaum; Amy Nichols; Bub Dillon; Diana Vossbrinck; Donna Putney; Elizabeth Beak; Fran Davis; Fred Broughton; Geoff Zehnder; Grady Sampson; Joe James; Kelly Gilkerson; Kevin Campbell; Patrice Buck

Meeting called to order at 9:00 am.

Discussion on Training Topics for 2010.
The following topics were recommended as research and training priorities (not in priority order).
  • Research to identify heirloom vegetable varieties best adapted to low-input, organic growing conditions
  • Research and other programs to increase the diversity of available seed for heirloom crop varieties available to growers in SC.
  • Training for growers and Extension agents on production, on-farm variety testing and seed saving for organic heirloom vegetables.
  • Training in on-farm produce safety and Good Agricultural Practices (GAP)
  • Training in backyard poultry production
    o Need to include education on egg law
  • Provide information on grants and $ available and how to navigate the grants.gov system
  • Research and training in season extension vegetable production
    o Source information on NRCS program for high tunnel funding for 2010
  • Development of “Beginner Farmer Kit”
    o Apprentice info
    o Locations/contact of Clemson Extension Agents/NRCS offices
    o HGIC
    o Mentor Farmers
    o Success stories
    o SPIN Techniques
  • Business Training for Farmers- ‘Top 10 Ways to Fail on the Farm’ was promoted. CFSA will hold this workshop later in spring.
  • Organic Grain Production/Organic Livestock production
    o NC State Organic Grain production
    o Anson Mills- Glen Roberts
    o Jesse Adkins- Cane Creek Farm has mill he wants to start using
    o Inman Feed Mill still has operating feed mill and will do custom mixes
    o Campobello grower who mills/grows own feed
    o Whole foods as potential sponsor
  • Marketing Workshops
    o Developing relationships with Whole Foods, etc.
    o Customer Service
    o Labeling/Branding
    o Disparity
    o Pricing (price point to up competition between members)
    o Food safety
    o SCDA’s market manager tool kit
    o Linking farmers to markets
  • Soil fertility
    o Biochar – Jeff Novack @ USDA facility in Florence
  • Biofuel workshops; Florence biocrops, Piedmont Biofuels, Biomass Capitol Assistance Program (BCAP) for growing biocrops
  • Season extension/hoop house/high tunnel - Steve Moore gave great presentation
    o Need place to market items year round; local restaurants, farmers markets
    o Combine w/ NRCS hoop house workshop

Discussion to Prioritize Topics for Development in 2010.
Geoff Zehnder indicated that he could cooperate with Dr. Chris Ray (SC Crop Improvement Association) to develop a USDA OREI proposal for a research and extension project to characterize heirloom legume germplasm to identify varieties best suited to organic management, and to provide training in heirloom
production, variety testing and seed saving for growers and Extension agents. Based on the discussion points listed above, the AC members unanimously gave approval for this project as a top priority for development in 2010. Geoff indicated that he would proceed with the proposal development.

Training in food safety and Good Agricultural Practices for farmers and farmer’s market managers should be a top priority for 2010.

Training in backyard poultry production should be a top priority for 2010.

The following training topics should be pursued in 2010 based on available funding:

- Top 10 Ways to Fail on the Farm. This could be combined with beginning farmer training.
- Organic Grain Production (expert from NCSU).
- Soil Fertility Including potential for Biochar application. Could be combined with training in biodiesel training (biocrops).
- Season extension vegetable production using high tunnels.

The question was posed about the convenience of two day training vs. two or several one day trainings with the general consensus being that two day trainings were more practical and convenient to attend.

Several names and publications were suggested for the beginning farmer workshops; Dan Parson and Maria Baldwin for new farmer success stories. Kim Douglas suggested the use of lasagna gardening techniques for new farmers due to its ability to subdue weeds and ease of use. Spin gardening techniques were also indicated as a resource for beginning farmers. Geoff Zehnder noted the usefulness of the recently released Crop Rotation on Organic Farms: A Planning Manual and that it is available through the SARE program website.

As a next step, a schedule of training and other events will be developed by Geoff Zehnder and Kelly Gilkerson based on the above recommendations.

Meeting adjourned at 11:50 AM.

Respectfully submitted,
Kelly Gilkerson
February 22, 2009
kgilker@clemson.edu
MEETING MINUTES

12:00 till 1:30: Lunch sponsored by Anderson County and prepared by Friends Catering prepared using local ingredients.

Meeting called to order at 1.30 pm.

Advisory Committee Members Present:
John Andrae, Russell Duncan, Brandon Grace, Dave Lamie, Alan Moore, Amy Nichols, Allison Schaum, Jim Smith, Jennifer Sparks, Ellie Taylor, James Wilkins

OPENING SESSION

Welcome and Introduction, Geoff Zehnder, Clemson Sustainable Agriculture Program. Overview of the SARE funding mechanism and the SC Model State Program. PowerPoint presentation

Review of 2008 Critical Issues and Advisory Recommendations Geoff Zehnder, Clemson Sustainable Agriculture Program. A list of 2008 critical issues is available in PowerPoint format at INSERT LINK

Review of 2008 Sustainable Agriculture Program Activities Geoff Zehnder, Clemson Sustainable Agriculture Program. A list of 2008 activities is available in PowerPoint format at INSERT LINK

Updates presented by Regional Groups Brandon Grace, Upstate chapter of Carolina Farm Stewardship Association. Alan Moore for Lowcountry Local First and Lowcountry chapter of Carolina Farm Stewardship Association

Discussion on Training Topics for 2009. During the group discussion the following training topics were recommended for development given available resources (not in priority order).

- Training on new grant programs that individuals can apply for; i.e. agriculture programs related to the economic stimulus funding, value-added producer grants, etc.
  - The Rural Development Center at Sandhill REC can assist with this
- Training for extension agents on sustainability (concepts, new initiatives, etc) and how to connect with growers and consumers
  - Organize an agriculture summit in Charleston
- Training on technology that can help local growers. For example email applications to reach consumers, eCommerce technology, other internet technology (Dave Lamie has developed a curriculum on this)
  - Training on distance learning technology; i.e. Adobe Connect
  - Conduct training using webinars so anyone with a computer can participate
- Organize a workshop on economic opportunities in agriculture
  - Conduct another Marketing 101 workshop
  - Creating local markets for small farmers
- Organize a workshop or course on the “Transformation of Agriculture in the 21st Century
- Training on draught mitigation strategies in agriculture
- Conduct Farm Energy training (SC agents will be invited to attend NCAT energy training in North Carolina in September
- Organize trainings in conjunction with the CU Extension Program teams (i.e. Agronomy, Horticulture, etc)
- Agritourism training (Dave Lamie can help with Agritourism training)
• Training on farm labor issues; i.e. labor alternatives and solutions for small farms (Alan Moore can help with this)
• Training on collecting production and economic data on the farm

Potential Training Sites
• The Madren Center at Clemson University
• Lowcountry Location such as Restaurant that sources local food

Following these recommendations participants discussed the need to strengthen relationships between Clemson University and local farmers. Participants felt that a top priority issue is the need for strategic planning among Clemson administration, specialists and extension agents on how to meet the needs of a changing agriculture in South Carolina. A suggestion was made to organize an Agricultural Summit involving the above plus state agribusiness representatives, state legislators and proponents of sustainable agriculture and the sustainable agriculture industry (i.e. business leaders like Glenn Roberts of Anson Mills). It was also suggested that the format include a keynote speaker, poster session and published proceedings, and presentations on the available resources (i.e. taking inventory), and on priority issues, needs from each sector; i.e. farming, extension, industry. The Farm Bureau should also be involved. Another suggestion was made to investigate holding the Summit in conjunction with the PSA Conference in December.

Participants felt that it is important to get Clemson administrative buy-in for this Summit. A suggestion was made to organize a core group of CU people with an interest in sustainable agriculture to meet and develop a strategy for planning the Summit that would have the support of stakeholders. Once developed, the plan could be presented at the VP Cabinet meeting.

As a next step, Geoff Zehnder will develop a draft list of potential members for the core CU Sustainable Agriculture group with input from other CU members present. A meeting of the core group will be organized sometime in early April.

Respectfully submitted,
Geoff Zehnder
February 22, 2009
zehnder@clemson.edu
OPEN FORUM ON SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE & SOUTH CAROLINA SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

SUNDAY JANUARY 13, 2008
Sandhill Research and Education Center, Columbia, SC

MEETING MINUTES

12:00 till 1:00: Lunch prepared by Rosewood Market and Deli using locally grown chicken, produce and grains.

OPENING SESSION

Welcome and Introduction, Geoff Zehnder, Clemson Sustainable Agriculture Program. Overview of the SARE funding mechanism, the SC Model State Program and 2007 activity highlights. PowerPoint presentation available at www.clemson.edu/sustainableag.

Update on the New SC Sustainable Agriculture Websites, Kelly Gilkerson, Clemson Sustainable Ag Program.

Low Country and Upstate Advisory Group Updates. Geoff Zehnder (for Susan Chewning) and Bill Welch. Reports on 2007 activities and plans for 2008. Susan Chewning remains chair of the Low Country group and Brandon Grace with Anderson County is the new Upstate group chair. Announcements of 2008 group meetings and activities will be forthcoming.

Carolina Farm Stewardship Association Update; Roland McReynolds, CFSA Executive Director. Roland gave an update on CFSA activities in SC during 2007 including the successful Upstate Farm Tour in October, and the CFSA Benefit Dinner hosted by Walker Miller and the Happy Berry on October 13. He mentioned that CFSA will also organize Biodiesel workshops in SC in conjunction with Piedmont Biofuels with a grant from USDA Risk Management Agency. Roland also mentioned CFSA interest in helping to establish community kitchens and a farm incubator in SC.

Anderson County Farm to School and Farm to Plate Initiatives. Brandon Grace (Anderson County) and Allison Schaum (Palmetto Agricultural Consultants). A report was provided on the recent and successful Ag Summit held in Anderson County, and on plans for the local food initiatives to enhance opportunities for farmers in the county. Anderson County has also submitted a proposal to host the CFSA Conference this year.

Walker Miller also mentioned that SCDA will receive significant funding for promotion and marketing of ag products. SCDA contacts include Fred Broughton, Ansley Rast, Larry Boylston and Martin Eubanks.

Joe James with the Corporation for Economic Opportunity gave an overview of renewable energy initiatives in the state, including the SC Biomass Council that provides funding opportunities through an in-house grants program. Joe indicated that stakeholders representing the small farm community should provide more input into discussions on renewable energy from biomass. Joe also mentioned the SC Climate, Energy and Commerce Advisory Committee, of which Joe is a member. The Committee was recently established by Governor Sanford to address climate change issues.

Review of 2007 SC Sustainable Agriculture Program Activities. Geoff Zehnder, Clemson Sustainable Agriculture Program. A list of 2007 activities is available in PowerPoint format at www.clemson.edu/sustainableag.

DISCUSSION: Critical Issues to Address in 2008 (facilitated by Roland McReynolds)

An initial discussion focused on the need for community connections to facilitate the growth of local food movements. Specific suggestions for individuals/groups we should contact included:
  • Agriculture Commissioner Weathers
  • SC Food Policy Council (contact there is Susan Frost with DHEC)
• Develop displays/presentations to present at ag industry meetings
• Engage Extension. Develop training on forming local food teams led by extension agents in cooperation with community leaders. Provide agents with a toolbox of strategies for them to take the lead in promoting community food systems (i.e. engaging appropriate community members to promote community food systems).
• Involve Community Development Agents in training programs. Agents could bring local farmer market managers and community leaders to training events. Outcome of this training would be the formation of community food groups that could take steps to enhance market opportunities.

A suggestion was made to conduct research and training in critical areas of importance to new farmers. Critical topics that were identified are:
• Organic vegetable production, particularly high value varieties like heirlooms
• Market economics; i.e. how to price products
• Market demand and assessment
• Farm site evaluation
• Consumer education
• Product packaging and displays
• Good Agricultural Practices
• Practical and easy solutions that address infrastructure needs (i.e. ideas to build inexpensive cold storage facilities, etc)
• How to create a system for marketing and distribution of farm products
• Engaging farmer market managers and local community leaders to assist with marketing efforts
• Use successful farmers as instructors (i.e. Alex Hitt could speak on farming as a livelihood)

Other suggestions:
• Organize grant-writing workshops for extension agents and farmers in cooperation with the USDA Rural Development Center at Sandhill REC (Walter Harris)
• Develop a model for forming local food policy teams (CFSA has developed a curriculum on forming local food advisory groups)
• Organize basic training on organic certification
• Organize training on organic grain production and marketing (Glenn Roberts with Anson Mills was suggested as a potential instructor)
• Communicate the need for research on soil fertility (i.e. appropriate use of cover crops, organic soil amendments) to appropriate research people
• The Meat Lab at Clemson University. Contact the manager Mark Stevenson about the possibility of making the processing facility available to the public.

Sustainable Agriculture Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes

Advisory Committee Members Present

Meeting called to order at 9:00 AM.

Dr. Dave Lamie with the Clemson Inst. for Community and Economic Development gave an overview and update on the MarketMaker system, an interactive mapping system that locates businesses and markets of agricultural products. The South Carolina MarketMaker website that will link producers and consumers will be available soon.
Fred Broughton with SC Dept. of Agriculture gave an update on the Certified SC Grown Program to promote local products. $2 million has been allocated for the program and an additional $2 million has been requested. SCDA is also partnering with individuals and organizations in the Lowcountry to promote local foods, with plans to expand the initiative to other areas of the state. SCDA will also be conducting training for farmers market managers on topics such as food safety and Good Agricultural Practices (Jack Dantzler is the contact person). They have plans to form an association for farmers who sell to farmers markets; may be handled through the Direct Marketing Association.

Discussion on Training Topics for 2008. The committee reviewed discussion from the Open Forum meeting on January 13 and suggested the following training topics for development (in priority order):

- General training in organic farming practices (to be held in conjunction with Sumter Cooperative Farms with funding from SARE PDP).
- Organic heirloom vegetable production. Select varieties from the Clemson Heirloom Vegetable Program for demonstration and track costs of production and potential profits.
- Management of Livestock Parasites (John Andrae and Susan Duckett suggested as instructors).
- Use the Sandhill Farmers Market as a demonstration site; i.e. what makes a successful farmers market vendor.
- Good Agricultural Practices and Food Safety.
- Small Livestock Production and Processing (hold at Clemson and use the Meat Lab).
- Integrated Livestock Production and Rotational Grazing (could possibly be integrated with above).
- Biodiesel and Oil Seed Crop Production (Bob Bett, Geoff Z., Terry Walker, Mac Horton).
- Development of Community Food Systems (Nancy Creamer and Lisa Forehand with CEFS are NC contacts who have organized training).
- How to Organize a Local Food Shed (related to above topic). Develop a training model with lead extension agents who will partner with others in the community to create a team and procedures for working together. Agents will be asked to bring someone from their community; i.e. farm market manager, town planner, etc.
- Training Topic: “You Have 5 Acres; Now What Do You Do?” This training would focus on initial infrastructure needs, costs, getting started.
- Goat Production (Danny Howard and Jerry Mums possible instructors).

Potential Training Sites:

- Pee Dee REC (Biodiesel workshop; Bob Bett contact person).
- Spartanburg Library (Fran Davis contact person).
- Jersey Thyme Farm (Patrice Buck contact person).
- Furman University (Southern Living House and Farm; James Wilkins contact person).
- Sandhill Farmers Market (Austin Jenkins contact person).
- Clemson Meat Lab (Mark Stevenson contact person).

Some Funding Opportunities to Investigate:

- USDA Community Food Projects Competitive Grants.
- USDA Value Added Producer Grants.
- USDA Organic Research Program.

Next Steps:

- Organize Biodiesel Workshop to be held the end of February at Pee Dee REC (Elizabeth Gibbs with CFSA, Bob Bett, Geoff Zehnder).
- Plan summer training in organic farming practices (Gayla Carle and Azeez Mustafa, Sumter Cooperative Farms, and Geoff).
- Develop training/demonstration on organic heirloom vegetable production. Quantify economics of production as part of the project.
- Contact CU Meat Lab manager Mark Stevenson re: use of facility for processing and training events (Kelly and Geoff).
- Contact County and State Extension Advisory Committees (Kelly and Geoff).
- Contact Sandhill Farmers Market manager Austin Jenkins about possible workshop for extension agents and farmers on marketing strategies.
• Write letter of interest in use of Sandhill Farmers Market for training (to Mac Horton from Geoff)
• Cooperate with South Carolina State University to organize training on Sustainable Vegetable Production and Pest Management for minority farmers
• Pursue ideas for training on the following topics given availability of funds (if people are interested in organizing a workshop on any of these topics please contact Kelly or Geoff):
  o Organic Grain Production and Marketing
  o Small Livestock Production and Processing
  o Integrated Livestock Production and Rotational Grazing
  o Good Agricultural Practices and Food Safety
  o Goat Production and Marketing

Advisory Committee meeting adjourned at noon followed by lunch (provided by Rosewood Market) and a meeting of SC CFSA members led by Roland McReynolds.

Respectfully submitted,
Geoff Zehnder January 31, 2008
zehnder@clemson.edu
Open Forum on Sustainable Agriculture on Sunday February 11, 2007 & South Carolina Sustainable Agriculture Advisory Committee Meeting on Monday February 12, 2007

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Area of Expertise/Interest</th>
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<tr>
<td>Alvarez, Sharon</td>
<td>Vegetables and herbs</td>
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<td>Elaine Bearden</td>
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<td>Mustafa, Azeez and Fathiyyah</td>
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<td>Aspiring farmer, attorney</td>
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<td>Broken Wing Farm; poultry, pork, vegetable farming</td>
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<td>Zehnder, Geoff</td>
<td>Clemson, SC SARE, organic farming, pest management</td>
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Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes

9:00 AM meeting begins. The discussion focused on Macro and Micro Issues identified during the Open Forum meeting, and on the Regional Advisory Groups.

Elaine Beardon suggested that we connect with other related, high-profile organizations; i.e. tourism and community development groups in order to better promote our agenda.

Dave Lamie suggested that we track progress of new, organic farmers in order to develop training to address their needs.
Elaine suggested that we track and contact people who buy land in SC and who want to farm, and invite them to participate in our programs.

Fattiyyah Mustafa suggested that we reach out to conventional farmers, some of whom may be interested in transitioning some land for certification.

A suggestion was made to involve extension agents in vocational ag and 4-H curricula.

A discussion on the potential of farmer markets as education/training venues:

- Farmer markets are a logical place to educate
- There is an opportunity at the Greenwood Market Vendors Meeting on May 7, and at the Spartanburg Market this spring
- Farmers could be surveyed on training needs. Extension agents could survey several farmers regarding training needs, offer to do training programs, recruit farmers for training events, and track benefits of training.
- Roland McReynolds suggested that we go to farmers markets to discuss the economic benefits of sustainable/organic farming, advertise training events and recruit farmers, then conduct training workshops in the fall.

A discussion on the need for farm business plan training:

- Roy Hollingsworth has conducted training in farm business planning and is willing to assist. Other people mentioned as qualified to do this training are Toby Boring (farm business management) and Carlos Carpio (both with Clemson). Dave Lamie may also have additional contacts.

Bill Welch mentioned the successful 3rd Thursday Program in Kentucky and suggested that we do a similar program in SC (i.e. farmers invited to a monthly meeting organized around a specific topic to be held at a central location (i.e. Sandhill REC).

Azeez and Fattiyyah Mustafa indicated that Sumter Cooperative Farms has grown to approx. 14 farmers and 200-300 acres (certified or in transition). They are involved in a Leadership Program where they mentor beginning farmers.

Bill Welch and Azeez Mustafa attended Organic Certification workshops for farmers in SC last year. The training was unique in that it walked farmers through the farm plan application; most left the training with a completed application.

The last hour of discussion focused on training for agents and farmers and on the regional advisory groups.

**Training for Agents**

How can we build on the 2006 IOIA Organic Certification and Inspection Training? Ideas included:

- Organize the same training for agents who were unable to attend
- Organize advanced training for agents who attended the initial training
- Survey agents who participated in the training to find out how they are using the training and how it has benefited their careers

**Specific Action Items:**

- Provide training on current markets for organic products and also on the demand
  - Whole Foods has indicated an interest in assisting with training
Should gather some data to validate demand in SC
- Get a current list (including new hires) of all extension agents working in the area of sustainable agriculture and related areas.
- Identify agents who need training
- Survey agents to determine specific topics for future training events and best times for training
- Finish the “Go To” list of expertise

**Recommended Topics for Agent Training During 2007**
- Organic inputs (soil amendments, pest management, etc)
- Pest management for organic crops
- IOIA Organic Livestock Certification (would require additional funds; i.e. SARE Enhancement Grant funds)
- Market potential for organics (see above). Could include presentations from a successful farmer and Whole Foods representative

**Training for Farmers**

**Recommended Topics for Farmer Training During 2007**
- Farm business planning (Roy Hollingsworth)
- Certification training
- Tours of successful farms
  - Obtain list of all certified organic growers in SC (CFSA can provide)

**Recommended Procedures for Farmer Training**
It was decided that three farmer markets will be used as pilot training venues during 2007. At the initial spring vendor meetings an agent and farmer will give a brief presentation on opportunities for marketing of organic products and on what’s involved with organic farming and certification. The agent will focus on “what’s involved” and the farmer will give her/his experiences. Easy to understand print information will be given to farmers as well as a schedule of CFSA/Sustainable Ag Program events.

Participating farmers will provide names and contact information, and will complete a survey to identify their interest in organic farming and their training needs (Geoff and Amy will develop draft surveys for review by the teams). The agent/farmer team will maintain contact with as many farmer-vendors as possible to determine their training needs and to invite them to future training events. Specific farmer markets and participants include:
- Low Country: Beaufort Farmers Market
  - Agent: York Glover
  - Farmer: Azeez Mustafa
- Midlands/Upstate: Greenwood
  - Agent: James Hodges
  - Farmer: Louise Powell (tentative; to be confirmed)
- Upstate: Spartanburg
  - Agent: Danny Howard (tentative; to be confirmed)
  - Farmer: Fran Davis

**Timeline for the above:**
Agent/Farmer teams will give presentations at the initial market vendor meeting in the spring. Farmer-vendors will be “recruited” at this meeting. If possible farmer vendors will be surveyed at the market (either print or oral) to determine their interest in organic farming, and their training needs.
Based on input from the farmer vendors, the teams will develop a list of training topics for the fall. Training events will be developed in cooperation with the Regional Advisory Groups and the Advisory Committee (Geoff Zehnder will be contact person for the AC). The teams should maintain monthly contact with their representative regional advisory groups.

Other Recommendations

Dave Lamie recommended that a 2-page informational brochure on sustainable/organic be developed for Community Development agents. He also indicated that a new USDA Rural Innovation Center has been established at Sandhill REC. We should establish contact with this group as they are a resource for grant writing training and other areas related to rural community development.

Advisory Committee meeting adjourned at 1:00 PM

Open Forum Meeting Minutes

48 Registered Attendees including farmers, agriculture professionals (NRCS, University Extension, state department of agriculture), university research and education specialists, community development specialists, non-government organization representatives and educators.

Lunch prepared by Chef Vinnie Livoti and Chef John Lindower, American Chefs Federation, Midlands Chapter. Local food ingredients used to prepare lunch provided by Broken Wing Farm (pork), Anson Mills (Carolina Grits), Rawl Farm (greens) and Carolina Plantation (rice).

OPENING SESSION

Welcome and Introduction, Geoff Zehnder, Clemson Sustainable Agriculture Program. Overview of the SARE funding mechanism, the SC Model State Program and 2006 activity highlights.

Introduction to the Sandhill REC and Plans for the Sandhill Farmers Market. Austin Jenkins, Natural Resource Manager, Sandhill Research & Education Center

Low Country Advisory Group Update; Gail Rahn, President, CFSA Board of Directors. Susan Chewning is group chair but was unable to attend. Gail gave an update including the most recent meeting in Beaufort hosted Judy Lessler who gave a presentation on starting and managing a CSA. Topics for future meetings include goat cheese production, small acreage farming, and season extension.

Midlands-Upstate Advisory Group Update; Bill Welch, Broken Wing Farm. Bill gave a summary of critical issues identified by the group at their September meeting. The next meeting is scheduled for April 20 from 2-4 PM at the Clemson Student Organic Farm on Clemson campus.

Carolina Farm Stewardship Association Update; Roland McReynolds, CFSA Executive Director. Roland gave an update on plans for South Carolina including the Upstate Farm Tour in October, and the CFSA Benefit Dinner to be hosted by Walker Miller and the Happy Berry on October 13. Roland also mentioned discussions about establishing community kitchens and a farm incubator in SC.

The New Farm Bill and Implications for Small-Scale Farms in South Carolina. Tony Kleese, Eastern Carolina Organics and former CFSA Executive Director
Fred Broughton with SC Dept. of Agriculture mentioned that funds have been appropriated for a state branding program and an advertising campaign for SC products.

Joe James mentioned a new loan program that may be available to small-scale farmers. Information is available at http://www.innovativebank.com/site/soho.html. He also mentioned that Whole Foods has earmarked $10 million that will be available for below-prime rate loans.

Review of Critical Issues Identified in 2006
Geoff Zehnder, Clemson Sustainable Agriculture Program (please contact Geoff for a listing of critical issues).

DISCUSSION: Critical Issues to Address in 2007

The discussion focused large-scale or “macro” issues and smaller-scale or “micro” issues. Macro issues most likely cannot be addressed solely with state Sustainable Agriculture Program resources (involvement of other groups would be needed).

**Macro-Scale Critical Issues**

- Promote use of local foods in schools
  - Need for greater advocacy
    - Need for greater supply of locally produced foods
    - Lack of adequate school kitchens to handle and prepare local ingredients

  Shawn Jadrnicek mentioned the lack of nutritious foods in schools and the lack of mass transit as barriers to community food security and more sustainable agriculture. Fred Broughton mentioned that some South Carolina transit authorities serve farmer markets in some communities.

- Community food security
  - There is a need to quantify consumption (i.e. how much food is consumed and how much is produced locally)
  - Have representatives attend Governor’s Conference on Tourism (i.e., link sustainable agriculture with related, high-profile programs)

- There is a need for a Land Link Program to source land for new farmers

- There is a need for a farm incubator program to provide beginning farmers with knowledge and resources needed to start a farming operation

- There is a need for a site(s) to demonstrate edible landscape practices

**Micro-Scale Critical Issues**

- Need for expanded research on sustainable/organic pest management
  - There is a need to identify specific pest problems that need research attention
  - There is a need for a person to coordinate the communication of pest problems needing attention to researchers
    - Develop a crop/livestock specific list-serve
    - Identify 4-5 specific pest problems per year
• Organize and communicate with Farmers Market managers in South Carolina
  o Make Farmer Markets more farmer-friendly (i.e. through education/workshops for managers)

• Youth Education (4-H and FFA)
  o Engage 4-H agents in our organization
  o Assist 4-H agents with curriculum development

**Micro Scale Issues (continued)**
Investigate development of a state organic label
  o Develop solid criteria
  o Tie-in with the proposed labeling program for SC products (have special “organic” labels printed for labeling of SC organic products)

• Connect with other like-minded organizations and programs; i.e.
  o South Carolina Food Policy Council (Keith Willoughby is a CFSA representative)
  o The South Carolina Value Added Program
  o County and State Extension Advisory Committees (contact your local extension office for meeting schedules).

• There is a need for additional workshops on organic certification (for farmers and ag professionals)

• There is a general lack of understanding of USDA incentive programs, i.e.
  o NRCS EQUIP, Easement programs
  o Farm Service Agency Farm Conservation Programs
  o Community Assistance Programs

• Members from our group should communicate with county and statewide Extension Advisory Committees (contact your local extension office for contact information and meeting schedules)

This concluded the discussion on Critical Issues.

A vote was taken to choose a topic for a short course to be organized in South Carolina by the Southern Sustainable Agriculture Working Group (SSAWG) during 2007. The topics in order of preference are:

1. Organic Vegetable Production and Marketing (15)
2. Meat Goat Production and Marketing (9)
3. Pastured Broiler Production and Marketing (7)
4. Cut Flower Production and Marketing (6)
5. Management Intensive Grazing of Beef (3)
6. Pastured Turkey Production and Marketing (0)

Based on the vote SSAWG will conduct a short course on Organic Vegetables, and possibly also on Meat Goat Production. Information on the short course will be forthcoming.

Respectfully submitted
Geoff Zehnder
February 13, 2007
OPEN FORUM ON SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE
SUNDAY FEBRUARY 5, 2006
Columbia, SC
Mr. Friendly’s Cafe

70 Registered Attendees: Approximately 50% farmers, 25% Ag Professionals (NRCS, Clemson University, SC State University), 5% primary education, 20% other (including Community Development Specialists from Clemson Sandhill Research & Education Center)

Lunch prepared by Chef Scott of Mr. Friendly’s using locally-grown ingredients donated or provided by Wil-Moore Farms, Sumter Cooperative, Anson Mills, Tony Kleese and Tiffany’s Bakery.

INTRODUCTION

Tony Kleese, Executive Director, Carolina Farm Stewardship Association (www.carolinafarmstewards.org)
  • Overview of CFSA activities, local food guide

Geoff Zehnder, Clemson Sustainable Agriculture Program (zehnder@clemson.edu)
  • Overview of SARE funding programs for research and training

Emile DeFelice, SC Director, Carolina Farm Stewardship Association (emile@carolinafarmstewards.org)
  • Overview of South Carolina CFSA activities to promote local farms and foods

Hugh Weathers, SC Commissioner of Agriculture (hweathe@scda.sc.gov)
  • Presented some statistics on production and consumption of agriculture products in SC that demonstrate a growing need/demand for local products.

DISCUSSION: TRAINING AND EDUCATIONAL NEEDS FOR EXTENSION AGENTS, FARMERS AND OTHER AGRICULTURE PROFESSIONALS

General Comments
  • General lack of understanding of low input, sustainable agriculture practices. There is a need to expose agents to viable, low input farming operations; demonstrate the profitability of sustainable/organic operations, marketing opportunities.
  • Agents need information on the cost-effectiveness of sustainable/organic operations; enterprise budgets, value-added pricing opportunities, success stories
  • Much discussion about providing training in on-farm research. For credibility, agents must have reliable, research-based information upon which to make recommendations. Certified organic research facilities are available on Clemson campus, at the Coastal Research Center (Charleston), and at the Edisto Research Center (Blackville)
  • To compete for grant funds, there is a need for grant writers (volunteers). Grant-writing workshops would be valuable
  • There is a critical need to develop a “skills and expertise” list (farmers and ag professionals in SC available to provide assistance)
  • The sustainable/organic community would benefit from collaboration with other conventional agriculture organizations in the state

Recommendations for Training Programs
  • On-farm poultry processing
  • Grass fed beef production
  • Agent tours of profitable farms
  • Provide tasting opportunities in combination with training programs; information on nutritional benefits of locally grown and marketed products
Training and Educational Needs (continued)

- There is a need to incorporate topics on sustainability and organic production into Master Gardener programs. The state MG Conference will be held in late March, 2006.
- Training in methods to reduce pesticide inputs

Other Needs

- Tie-in with other state organizations
  - SC Food Policy Council (Emile)
  - SC CROP (Emile)
  - Palmetto Agribusiness Council (Joe James)
  - Farm Bureau
    Univ. of South Carolina people with expertise in sustainability

- Need for Extension agriculture policy specialist
- Need for Rural Development Specialist (experts in community and rural development are located at the Clemson Sandhill Research and Education Center and on Clemson campus).
- Need for a transition team to assist growers with transition to organic

DISCUSSION: INCREASING THE SUPPLY OF LOCALLY-GROWN AND ORGANIC FOODS IN SOUTH CAROLINA: ASSISTING NEW AND EXISTING FARMING ENTERPRISES

Farm Enterprise Help/Needs

- We must quantify the market for local/organic products (use statistics as incentives)
- Develop an inventory of organic land and keep current
- Enterprise budgets for crops and livestock
- Slaughtering/processing facilities are needed
- Workshops on farm business start-up procedures, development of business plans, would be helpful
- Develop “how to” manual of techniques for small scale farming (e.g. weed control)
- Develop an SC brand and monitor standards
- Identify geographic cluster areas to facilitate infrastructure development (connecting farms to markets, etc)
- Youth outreach programs to create a new generation of farmers
- Develop an organic grain pilot project to stimulate organic grain production (several farmers volunteered land; funding is needed)
- Make contacts with and educate the lending community; create micro-enterprise loan program
- Lobby state and national representatives to enhance programs that help smaller producers (e.g., farm bill)
- Develop “tool kit” for land protection (see resources below)

Potential Resources

- Look at farm incubator programs in other states (e.g., Intervale); also Land Link programs
- SC land preservation programs
- American Farmland Trust (SC office)
- USDA Small Farm/Rural Development Programs

Meeting adjourned at 4:30 PM. Advisory Committee to meet on Feb. 6 to review discussion points and develop plan for 2006 programs.