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