



Newsletter for Western Agricultural Educators

Volume 2 Number 1

April 2011

The Western Center's Regional Results Based Competitive Grants Program Has Awarded Funding to Over 200 Projects in the 13 Western United States and U.S. Pacific Islands

The following article features western region farmers and ranchers who have made substantial improvements in their ability to manage financial risk since 2001 through the efforts of educators in the west who have provided training and education to this diverse audience of agricultural producers.



Karen Killinger, WSU Food Science and Human Nutrition, conducting a food safety workshop during the OSU Small Farms Conference February 2011.

For the past 10 years farmers and ranchers in the western region have participated in education and training programs that have helped them to make significant gains mitigating the challenging and varying risks that fall within the five major risk categories the grant program covers. In the area of financial risk, 82 projects in 13 states and American Samoa have helped over 1,900 producers gain increased knowledge of business and strategic planning tools, with nearly half of these participants making a decision to develop and implement a business plan. Close to 2,500 producers have conducted a financial analysis of their farming operation, with 839 developing a record keeping system and another 446 implementing a financial record keeping system. A record keeping project designed and delivered by University of Arizona FRTEP and Extension Specialists, has been adopted by other educators in the west and nationally to reach an even larger segment of under served agricultural producers.

In the area of business and strategic planning alone, 1,739 farmer and rancher participants have completed a business and/or a marketing plan, committed to using financial planning tools including the establishment of record keeping systems, and have conducted an analysis of their production and market strategies. Other actions that these producers engaged in included developing mission and vision statements for their ag enterprises, creation of long term inventory, monitoring and

The Extension Risk Management Education program was authorized in the 2000 revisions to the Federal Crop Insurance Act and the legislative title is Partnerships for Risk Management Education, Sec. 524 (a)(3). There has been no increase in funding since 2001. Mandatory language authorizes the program at \$5 million a year.

TAA Trade Adjustment Assistance for Farmers Technical Assistance

Western Region Trade Adjustment Assistance

Trade Adjustment Assistance for Farmers was reauthorized under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009. More than 200 Western Region Asparagus growers and Alaska Shrimpers are participating in the Extension TAA training and are eligible for the TAA cash payments. Additionally, there were a few catfish producers and Gulf shrimpers who qualified and reside in the Western Region. The Western Center, as a Regional partner with the University of Minnesota, garnered support and direction from the Asparagus Commissions in California and Washington and with the Alaska Shrimp Association to determine curriculum relevant for the respective commodity participants. The University of California Extension and Washington State University Extension have been integral to the development and 12 hours of Intensive Training provided to Asparagus producers while the University of Alaska, Fairbanks, Sea Grant program has provided the training for Alaska Shrimp TAA participants.

Two thirds of the TAA participants in the West have completed Phases 1 through 3 of the TAA training program, including 12 hours of Intensive Training, and have a Business Planning Consultant assigned to assist them in the development of a Long Term Business Plan. Eight individuals with backgrounds in Extension, Farm Lending and the Farm Service Agency experience have been recruited and trained as Business Planning Consultants to coach participants in developing their long term business plan.

With the Western Region TAA for Farmers training well underway, the Western Center will be helping out by working with TAA Shrimp fishermen in North Carolina and Texas. The Western Center will coordinate the business plan coaching and plan approval for an additional 1,200 shrimp participants in Texas and North Carolina.

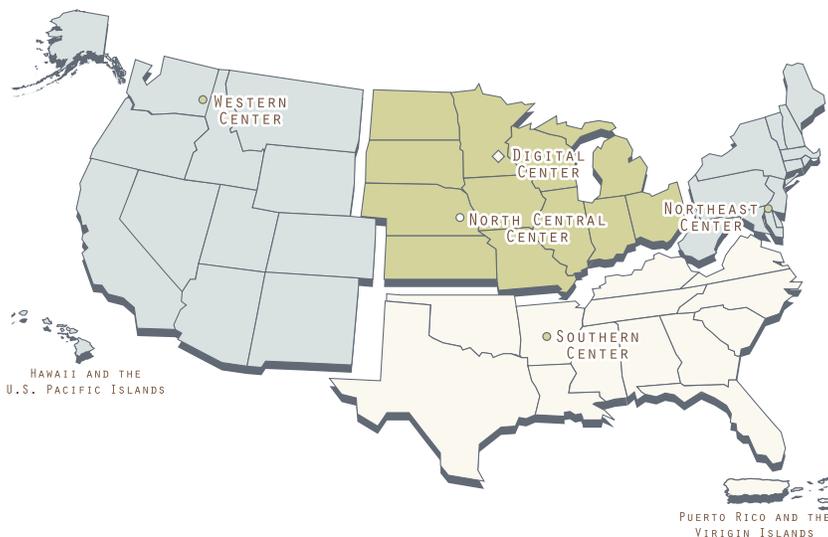
Grant Program, continued from pg. 1

stewardship plans, conducting an analysis of alternative and/or value added production practices and utilization of other business decision tools for managing business risk.

While all of the risk management gains farmers and ranchers have accomplished are too numerous to mention here, the following highlights just a few of the long term risk management outcomes that producers have achieved over the past ten years:

- 5,097 agricultural producers engaged in marketing plans and strategies and analysis of market fundamentals.
- 1,546 producers acquired skills for improving cost of production and benchmarking and utilized product and enterprise diversification tools.
- 993 producers engaged in transition and estate planning activities with 434 completing a written succession plan.
- 408 producers addressed food safety liability and personal and business liability risks making significant changes to their operations.

Congratulations to our project directors in both the public and private sectors, who have played an instrumental role in delivering training and education to a diverse audience of farmers and ranchers in the west with a strong commitment to helping them improve their financial viability.



Participants tour Sally Harper's pecan farm in Mesilla Park, New Mexico as part of Joanie Quinn's program, "Managing the Risk of Transition to Organic Certification".



Consumers and producers enjoy extended season farmers market, a result of Larry Lev's (OSU) program, "Managing Marketing, Production and Financial Risks Associated with Season Extension".



Participants of the Wyoming-Nebraska High Plains Ranch Practicum discuss range condition evaluation near Scottsbluff, Nebraska as part of the 8-day comprehensive ranch management program.

The Washington State University Western Center for Risk Management Education is one of five USDA NIFA competitively awarded Extension Risk Management Education Centers that conduct a regional results and outcome based competitive risk management education grant program serving agricultural producers. State university Extension educators and other partners in the public and private sector in the west have provided tools and training for producers to support them in establishing long-term risk management strategies, strengthening economic viability of their farm and ranch enterprises.



United States
Department of
Agriculture

National Institute
of Food and
Agriculture

WSU Extension programs and employment are available to all without discrimination. Evidence of noncompliance may be reported through your local WSU Extension office.