

## **2009 Annual State Report to the Southern Region SARE Program**

### **South Carolina**

**Date of Report:** January 20, 2010

**Project Directors:** Geoff Zehnder, Co-Coordinator  
Sustainable Agriculture Programs  
B28 Long Hall  
Clemson University, Clemson, SC 29634-0365  
Phone: 864-656-6644 Fax: 864-656-6863  
Email: [zehnder@clemson.edu](mailto:zehnder@clemson.edu)

Edoe Agbobjan, Co-Coordinator  
SC State University 1890 Extension  
PO Box 200  
Elloree, SC 29047  
Phone: 803-897-5076 Fax: 803-897-1099  
Email: [eagbodjan@scsu.edu](mailto:eagbodjan@scsu.edu)

**State Subcontract No.** RE675-155/4690408 and RD309-105/4690228

**Current Reporting Period:** January 2009 through December 2009

**Amount:** \$40,000

### **II. Abstract**

The MSP Assistant position at Clemson continued to facilitate and expand statewide training program efforts in 2009 in collaboration with South Carolina State University (1890) Extension, the Carolina Farm Stewardship Association (CFSA) and the state Department of Agriculture. We continue to involve a greater diversity of stakeholders who have input into the planning process for statewide training by recruiting new members to our statewide and regional advisory groups. We continue to expand training opportunities for Extension agents and other agriculture professionals by organizing educational/training events on specific topics related to stakeholder-identified training needs, and by supporting professional development opportunities in sustainable agriculture. Highlights of 2009 training activities organized for Extension agents, agriculture professionals and farmer-educators included a comprehensive training program in sustainable vegetable production focused on minority and limited resource farms, a two-day training course on Good Agricultural Practices (GAPs) with a focus on fresh produce food safety, an on-farm training course in ecologically-based weed management, and special Extension agent workshops and farm tours organized in conjunction with the Carolina Farm Stewardship Association Conference.

### III. Summary Report

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

**(a) Expand the existing strategic planning process for statewide sustainable agriculture development.** We continue to involve a greater diversity of stakeholders who have input into the planning process for statewide training by recruiting new members to our statewide and regional advisory groups. An "Open Forum" public meeting was held in early 2009 where participants discussed key issues and needs related to sustainable agriculture development in the state. The outcome of this meeting is a list of issues/needs and recommendations. Second, we have formed two local advisory groups affiliated with South Carolina chapters of the Carolina Farm Stewardship Association, one in low country South Carolina and one in upstate South Carolina. These groups meet regularly to discuss local issues and the group chairs make recommendations for training activities to the MSP Assistant and Co-Coordinator. Thirdly, State Sustainable Agriculture Advisory Committee (AC) members attend the Open Forum meeting, and meet immediately afterwards to prioritize issues and to plan training/education activities for the year. We are also increasing our involvement with local community organizations and assist them with local sustainable agriculture development efforts.

**(b) Encourage Extension agents, NRCS, FSA and state Department of Agriculture staff and other sustainable agriculture educators to participate in the Carolina Farm Stewardship Association (CFSA) Annual Conference and other Professional Development Opportunities.** In 2009 the SC and NC SARE Programs cooperated on organizing Extension agent training events and professional development opportunities to be held in conjunction with the Carolina Farm Stewardship Association Conference in Black Mountain, NC. Special Extension agent training workshops and farm tours were organized with a focus on Good Agriculture Practices (see bullet list below), and a total of 10 travel scholarships were awarded to South Carolina 1890 and 1862 Extension agents to attend. This training provided an opportunity for participants to gain knowledge and competency in sustainable agriculture, and also facilitated interactions and established relationships between agriculture professionals and farmers. Approximately 25 limited resource farmers and farmer-educators from South Carolina attended the January Southern Sustainable Agriculture Working Group Conference (made possible by a special grant from SR SARE). In addition, we provide travel scholarships for extension agents and other agriculture professionals to attend other SC SARE training events, and provide support to Extension agents who wish to organize local sustainable agriculture training events.

**(c) Continue to provide support for the CFSA Annual Conference.** In 2009 the SC SARE Program was a Keynote Sponsor of the CFSA Conference and provided support for Extension agent and speaker conference registration and travel expenses (facilitated by a SARE Enhancement Grant).

**(d) Establish a process to recognize SC cooperative extension personnel for excellence in sustainable agriculture outreach.** Extension agents who exemplify outstanding dedication to the promotion of sustainable agriculture received travel scholarships to a sustainable agriculture event of their choice. In addition, in 2008 a South Carolina Sustainable Agriculture Extension Agent of the Year Award was developed to recognize outstanding accomplishments by Extension agents in sustainable agriculture. The 2009 award was announced at the CFSA Conference; this year's recipient is Mr. York Glover, Extension agent from Beaufort County.

**(e) Organize and conduct in-service training opportunities for Extension agents, NRCS, FSA and state Department of Agriculture personnel, agricultural educators, and for other interested persons.** Training events were held throughout 2009 according to priority needs identified at the February AC meeting (see training outcome summary under section 2 below).

**(f) Enhance professional development opportunities for extension agents.** Approximately 25 travel scholarships were provided for Extension agents and other agriculture professionals to attend the SC SARE training events listed in #2 below, and also to attend the CFSA Sustainable Agriculture Conference in Black Mountain, NC.

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

The following training/educational events were organized and conducted during 2009:

- February 21. *Open Forum on Sustainable Agriculture*, Anderson, SC. 52 stakeholders (including farmers, agriculture professionals and state agriculture officials) discussed issues related to sustainable agriculture development in South Carolina, and identified critical needs. The meeting enhanced communication and interaction among diverse groups, and identified areas of common interest. Anderson Civic Center, Anderson, SC.
- February 21. South Carolina Sustainable Agriculture Program State Advisory Committee Meeting, Anderson Civic Center, Anderson, SC. The Committee meets annually to review stakeholder needs and to prioritize training activities for the year.
- April 8: Hosted SARE Fellows Program Tour of 12 Aprils Dairy, Pelzer, SC.
- April 18. Provided on-site expertise to answer questions from Extension personnel and the public on sustainable/organic vegetable production; “Garden Fest”, South Carolina Botanical Garden, Clemson, SC.
- May 4 and 5. Hosted tours for the public including Extension personnel of the Clemson Organic Farm and Heirloom Vegetable Garden in conjunction with the Carolina Farm Stewardship Association Upstate Farm Tour.
- May 21 and 21. Organized and conducted a two-day training course on “Fresh Produce Safety Training in Good Agricultural Practices” for 26 farmer-educators and Extension Agents, Clemson University, Clemson, SC.
- June – August. Conducted educational “Farm Walks” (one each month) on sustainable/organic farming and pest management for the public including agriculture professionals at the Clemson Organic Farm.
- August – December. Sustainable Vegetable Production and Marketing Project (coordinated by SCSU and 1890 Extension personnel). Twenty two (22) small-scale, part-time, and limited resource farmers in Hampton, Allendale, Beaufort, Colleton, and Jasper Counties participated in the project. A central vegetable demonstration farm plot was established as a hands-on training resource, and four (4) cooperating vegetable farms were also utilized for training and demonstration and a vegetable field day for collard producers. The overall goals of this project were to help to slow the rapid decline in numbers of small, minority farms in the South Carolina Low Country, and to stimulate economic opportunities for small/minority farmers and assist them with the retention of their farm land.
- September 3. Recorded a television segment featuring SC SARE Program personnel for the ETV program “Making it Grow “on sustainable/organic agriculture.
- September 24. A one-day training course on “ Ecologically-Based Weed Management” for 76 farmers and Extension agents (taught by Dr. Mark Schonbeck). Clemson University Madren Center and the Clemson Organic Farm, Clemson, SC.
- October 24. Organized a day long “Farm Aid” event at the Clemson Organic farm attended by 300 people including agriculture professionals that included farm tours and discussions on sustainable/organic agriculture.
- October 27. “Grass Masters” workshop for Extension agents and farmers on sustainable livestock forage and pasture management. Clemson University (20 Extension agents and agriculture professionals attending).

- December 4. A workshop for Extension agents organized in conjunction with the CFSA Conference entitled: “The New Agriculture: Local Markets, Sustainable Business Principles, Good Agricultural Practices”. Black Mountain, NC. Approximately 50 participants.
- December 4. An Extension agent farm tour to Blue Ridge Food Ventures and Madison Family Farms held in conjunction with the CFSA Conference, Madison County, NC.
- December 15. Presentation on “Insect Pest Management in Certified Organic Production” for approximately 75 researchers, extension personnel and educators. Entomological Society of America Annual Meeting, Indianapolis, IN.

**3. Briefly describe expectations for future sustainable agriculture training events:** Based on stakeholder input and to meet increasingly stringent requirements for safe food handling and processing, we will continue to develop and offer training in Good Agricultural Practices (GAPs) for Extension agents, farmer-educators and other agriculture and food service professionals. Building on previous training programs we will also develop more advanced training in sustainable/organic vegetable production with a focus on pest management, in reducing on-farm energy inputs, and in building local food systems.

**Southern Region SARE Professional Development Program**  
**2009 Photo Identification Form for SARE State Activities**  
(make as many copies of this blank form as needed before listing photos)



**Photo #1**

Photographer's name: E. Agbodjan

Date: May, 2009

Location: Hampton County, SC

Subject and activity: Local vegetable farmers attending a field day organized by SCSU Extension to demonstrate sustainable vegetable production practices.



**Photo # 2**

Photographer's name: G. Zehnder

Date: May 21, 2009

Location: Clemson University Organic Farm, Clemson, SC

Subject and activity: Dianne Ducharme (pink shirt) explaining fresh produce food safety practices to SC Extension agents as part of a two-day GAPs training sponsored by SC SARE.



**Photo # 3**

Photographer's name: G. Zehnder

Date: September 24, 2009

Location: Heirloom Vegetable Garden, Clemson University

Subject and activity: Dr. Mark Schonbeck explaining sustainable weed management practices to participants in the "Ecologically-Based Weed Management Workshop" organized by SC SARE.