

2009 Annual State Report to the Southern Region SARE Program

DATE: January 28, 2010	
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CURRENT REPORTING PERIOD:	January 2009 to December 2009
SSARE FUNDING AMOUNT:	\$20,000

Abstract

North Carolina SARE PDP (NC SARE) promoted Sustainable Agriculture through the Center for Environmental Farming Systems (CEFS) Seasons of Sustainable Agriculture (SOSA) Workshops, the Carolina Farm Stewardship Association's (CFSA) Sustainable Agriculture Conference, and a pre-conference workshop: *"The New Agriculture: Local Markets, Sustainable Business Principles and Good Agricultural Practices."* Cooperative Extension Agents were awarded travel scholarships for various events throughout the year. Richard Boylan, Specialized Area Agent from Watauga County, was selected as the 2009 NC SARE Outstanding Extension Agent. Improved communication with North Carolina Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (NCDA&CS) was established. A resource *e-pamphlet* was developed and distributed.

Travel Scholarships

Support of County Demonstrations was a goal of NC SARE for 2009; however, due to economic challenges throughout the state, support of travel scholarships was determined to be the greatest need of Cooperative Extension Agents from NCSU and NCA&TSU at this time. Therefore, NC SARE focused most of its resources to fulfill this need. Scholarships were available for registration, lodging, and mileage up to a specified amount. Travel Scholarships were awarded to 38 Extension Agents. Once approved for a travel scholarship, agents were required to complete the online SARE Sustainable Agriculture basic course; if they had previously completed this course, the Southern SARE IPM online course was required.

Five agents were supported to attend the 2009 Southern Sustainable Agriculture Working Group (Southern SAWG) Conference.

Twelve agents were funded to attend various SOSA workshops offered by CEFS and held throughout the state.

- In compliance with the goal of NC SARE to track impacts, a trial evaluation form and procedure was developed using Survey Builder, an online survey tool. The initial trial indicates the workshops offer needed information and practical, useable ideas.

One agent attended the Organic Growers' School held in Flat Rock, NC.

NC SARE developed and held an all day workshop/tour preceding the CFSA Sustainable Agriculture Conference. Twenty agents from North Carolina were awarded travel scholarships to attend.

- The onsite post-event evaluations were favorable from all participants. All participants found at least 1 idea from the event that was applicable to their needs.

Developing Relationship with NCDA&CS

Paul Mueller and John O'Sullivan, State Coordinators for NC SARE, met with NCDA&CS Commissioner Steve Troxler and Deputy Commissioner Richard Reich in accordance with the suggestion made by James Davis III, NCDA&CS Special Assistant to the Commissioner and member of the NC SARE Advisory Committee. The purpose and history of the SARE program, the SARE competitive grants program (Research and Education, Professional Development Program and Sustainable Community) and the New Agent resource *e-pamphlet* were discussed.

North Carolina

- Discussion also included the possibility of funding a training next year for NCDA&CS Research Station staff using expertise available through the CEFS partnership.

New Agent Packet

An *e-pamphlet* with a brief introduction to Sustainable Agriculture and significant resources for North Carolina was developed and sent to the Cooperative Extension Service (CES) of NCSU and NCA&TSU county directors and co-directors, agents in sustainable agriculture, Family and Consumer Science and 4H. The e-pamphlet was sent through the CES system. Following its initial release, it will be used to introduce new Extension agents to sustainable agriculture. It is also available on the NC SARE website.

CFSA Sustainable Agriculture Conference

A meeting was held with CFSA and NC SARE and a plan was developed for support from NC SARE for the Sustainable Agriculture Conference.

NC SARE funded Timothy LaSalle, CEO from Rodale Institute, as the CFSA Conference keynote speaker.

NC SARE PDP Assistant acted as liaison between CFSA and NCSU and NCA&TSU faculty to facilitate various panels and workshop presentations throughout the conference.

NC SARE also developed and conducted an all day preconference extension agent workshop and tour: *"The New Agriculture: Local Markets, Sustainable Business Principles and Good Agricultural Practices (GAP)."* That program focused on local food enterprises, organic markets, distribution, good agricultural practices (GAP Training) and community centers for value-added products and storage for area producers. Presenters at the workshop included Bu Nygrens from Veritable Vegetable, California; Sandy Kronick from Eastern Carolina Organics (ECO) and Diane Ducharme of the NC Fresh Produce Safety Task Force. Tour guide Smithson Mills, former director of the Center for Assessment and Research Alliances (CARA) of Mars Hill College, shared the background of Blue Ridge Food Ventures, along with director, MaryLou Sergi. David Kendall, CES agent for Madison County, and Catherine Walker of Madison Family Farms provided a tour of their facility. A 100+ page manual focused on GAP was given to the workshop participants.

Twenty agents from North Carolina attended the preconference event. Four agents came from South Carolina.

Geoff Zehnder, South Carolina SARE State Coordinator and Julia Gaskin, SARE State Coordinator from Georgia were also present, yielding a total of 4 state coordinators (Paul Mueller and John O'Sullivan from North Carolina) in attendance. Four representatives from nonprofit organizations and 1 vocational agriculture teacher also attended the workshops.

- Preliminary onsite post-event evaluations indicate a high level of appreciation for the needed content and site visits offered by this preconference workshop and tour. One hundred percent of the agents felt they had at least one idea they could implement in their home counties. A 6-month follow up evaluation is planned.

North Carolina

3rd Annual NC SARE Outstanding Sustainable Agriculture Extension Agent

For the third year in a row, NC SARE selected a North Carolina Extension Agent who showed exemplary work in the field of sustainable agriculture.

This year's recipient was chosen on the basis of showing a developmental program committed to sustainable agriculture, with components that are environmentally sound, economically viable and socially just; exhibiting good partnership and collaboration with other stake holders in sustainable agriculture; and was able to demonstrate impacts in the area of sustainability.

The 2009 NC SARE Outstanding Sustainable Agriculture Extension Agent is Richard Boylan, Area Specialized Agent, from Watauga County. Richard was nominated by his fellow agents, chosen by a selection committee and presented the award at the CFSA Conference. He was awarded a wooden engraved plaque.

Collaboration with Rodale Institute

NC SARE covered the honorarium for Timothy LaSalle, CEO of Rodale Institute, in continuation of the relationship begun with Rodale last year when Paul Hepperly and Jeff Moyer presented at the 2008 CFSA Conference

Southern Sustainable Agriculture Working Group (Southern SAWG) Conference

Five limited income farmers and educators attended the 2009 Southern SAWG Conference. Five Cooperative Extension Agents were funded to attend as well.

NCA&TSU Small Farm Week

Funding was offered to NCA&TSU for Small Farm Week but it was not needed. Those funds were reallocated to other sustainable agriculture events.

Publicity

The NC SARE Hanging Poster and tri-fold display board were used at the CEFS SOSA High Tunnel Workshop, Goldsboro, NC; the Farm to Fork Conference, Raleigh, NC; and the Carolina Farm Stewardship Association Sustainable Agriculture Conference, Black Mountain, NC.

Energy Training for Agriculture Professionals [Southern SARE, CEFS, National Center for Applied Technology (NCAT)]

North Carolina hosted a 3-day regional alternative Energy Training for Agriculture Professionals at CEFS in Goldsboro, NC. Twenty-six Extension Agents and Agriculture Professionals from 12 states in the Southern SARE Region participated in the training.

2010 Future Events

J. Paul Mueller, NCSU, will step down as NC SARE State Coordinator. Paul has given exemplary service to NC SARE and is one of its founders. He will be succeeded by Steven P. Washburn, Professor of Animal Science at NCSU and long time advocate of sustainable agriculture. Steve's research and extension program has focused on pasture-based dairy systems.

Goals for 2010:

- Travel Scholarships for Extension Agents and other agriculture professionals for training
- Pre-CFSA Conference workshop and tour
- Support for CEFS Sustainable Agriculture Lecturer, NCA&TSU Small Farm Week and Farm Field Days, and CFSA's Sustainable Agriculture Conference keynote speaker

North Carolina

- Continue collaboration with NCDA&CS
- 4th Annual Distinguished Sustainable Agriculture Extension Agent Award
- Continue collaboration with NCDA&CS
- Maintain sustainable agriculture events calendar on website
- Evaluations immediately post-event and 3 and 12 months post-event as appropriate to determine outcomes of trainings.

Southern Region SARE Professional Development Program

2009 Photo Identification Form for SARE State Activities



Photo # 1
Photographer's name: Carol Moore
Date: Dec. 4, 2009
Location: CFSA's Sustainable Agriculture Conference, Blue Ridge Assembly, Black Mountain , NC
Subject and activity: (from left) Bu Nygrens, Veritable Vegetable, CA, Diane Ducharme, NC Fresh Produce Safety Task Force, Sandi Kronick, Eastern Carolina Organics. Key presenters at the NC SARE Extension Workshop: <i>The New Agriculture: Local Markets, Sustainable Business Principles and Good Agricultural Practices</i> held just before CFSA's annual Sustainable Agriculture Conference.



Photo # 2

Photographer's name: James Davis III

Date: July 14, 2009

Location: NC Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, Agriculture Bldg, 2 Edmonton St, Raleigh, NC

Subject and activity: (from left) J. Paul Mueller, NC SARE State Coordinator, NCSU, Commissioner Steve Troxler, NCDA&CS, John O'Sullivan, NC SARE State Coordinator, NCATSU. Meeting with NCDA&CS and NC SARE State Coordinators to discuss sustainable agriculture programs and ways to enhance collaboration.



Photo # 3

Photographer's name: Carol Moore

Date: December 5, 2009

Location: CFSA's Sustainable Agriculture Conference, Blue Ridge Assembly, Black Mountain, NC

Subject and activity: from left: Richard Boylan, Recipient of 2009 NC SARE Outstanding Sustainable Agriculture Extension Agent Award, John O'Sullivan, presenter of award. Richard's extension program has been devoted to assisting farmers and promoting the concepts of sustainable agriculture.