Cultivating Success Program Overview
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What is Cultivating Success?
A collaborative educational program in sustainable agriculture for Idaho and Washington State
Started in 2000
Made possible through cooperation by
University of Idaho Extension
Washington State University Extension
Washington State University

And funded through generous grants from

Cultivating Success

Program Goals:
• Education to foster long-term success of small-scale, sustainable farmers and ranchers in WA & ID
• Connect farmers, students, educators, communities, and professionals with sustainable food and farming models

Sustainable Small Farms
• Environmentally sound
  - Promoting biodiversity
  - Enhancing habitat
  - Protecting natural resources & farm land
  - Reducing carbon footprint
• Economically viable
  - Providing a living wage for farmers and farm workers
  - Contributing to vibrant and equitable regional food economies
• Socially responsible
  - Contributing to community food security, community health, and quality of life for farmers, farm workers, and community members

Achieving our Goals
A series of courses that provide beginning and transitioning farmers with:
• Planning and decision-making tools
• Ecologically sound production skills
• Marketing and research skills
Approach:
• Introduce students to successful farmer mentors and real life farms and food enterprises
• Participatory, community-based, experiential learning
• Farmers in the classroom, students on the farm
• Individual courses or a series for Cultivating Success™ Certificate

Target Audiences
Support systems (educators, wholesalers, retailers, lenders, service providers, etc.)

Participants:
• New and transitioning farmers
• Latino, Hmong, and immigrant farmers
• Women farmers
• Academic students
• Agricultural professionals
• Community members
Locations

• Courses are offered through
  - University of Idaho & Washington State University
    • On Campus
    • Online
    • Online Hybrid
  - ID and WA County Extension Sites
    • 30+ locations
  - On Farm
    • Farm Walks
    • Short courses
    • Internships & Mentorships
    • University Farms

Cultivating Success
County-Based Course Series

1. Sustainable Small Farming and Ranching (Whole Farm Planning)
   - Develop Farm Goals
   - Resource and Enterprise Assessment
   - Introduction to:
     • Integrated pest and weed management
     • Composting
     • Nutrient management
     • Crop rotations and cover cropping
     • Pasture management
     • Organic Certification
   - Study Local Farms & Markets
   - Write Whole Farm Plans

2. Agricultural Entrepreneurship and Business Planning - 14 week evening course or short course

3. Farm Mentorship or Internship - variable schedules

Adapted for Hmong and Latino audiences

Farmers as Teachers
2. Agricultural Entrepreneurship: Building a Sustainable Small Farm Business

• Course details:
  - Business Planning: the “Next Step”
  - Financial Management
  - Record Keeping
  - Labor Management
  - Legal and Regulatory Environment
  - Market Research
  - Network with service providers from federal and local programs

• Students create a working business plan for their small farm enterprise
Marketing Strategies

Making Business Cards and Farm Signs

On Farm Internship/Mentorship

- Participants work one-on-one with a farmer-mentor & faculty or extension coordinator
- Mutually agreed upon plan of study
- Hands-on experience in all aspects of production and marketing
- Seasonal or year-round, site specific
- Certified instructional mentors and farms
  - 12 trained, 7 sites certified including UI & WSU organic farms
- Site-specific curriculum associated with the operation
- Farmer Mentors receive ongoing assistance
Program Management

- Bi-State CS leadership team with producer representation:
  - Program & Curriculum development
  - Joint website & marketing
  - Regular management and evaluation meetings
  - Grant writing
- State level teams
  - Farmer mentor programs
  - Local non-profit partnerships
  - Instructor trainings
  - Course coordination

Program Results

- Cultivating Success courses offered at 31 sites
- Over 2400 students have attended at least one Cultivating Success course (>50% women)
- 319 Business Plans Developed
- 125 Latino families and 50 Hmong families have participated
- 66 instructors trained
- 14 farmers certified as mentors
- Part of new university curriculum in organic agriculture
- Bilingual educators and new small farms coordinators hired

Students surveys reveal...

- 100% increased their understanding of sustainable agriculture after completing Sustainable Small Farming and Ranching Course
- Over 90% say they are likely to use what they learned on their farms or in their work
- 98% rated the program as effective in potentially increasing the number and success of small farms in ID and WA
- 75% have made changes in farm management
- 80% have attended further educational activities

The most important things you learned?

- "Importance of small farms to the community and of the community to small farms"
- "How interconnected the environment on the land is...such as looking at insects in the area, soil quality, water etc. before designing the farm system."
- "Farming is about relationships; farm to earth, bugs to soil, farmers to customers, farmer to farmer."
- "How to plan and evaluate"
Student Perceptions

- Barriers to achieving success:
  - Lack of access to land, water, and capital
  - Many consumers are not educated
  - Limited access to markets and processing options
  - Language barriers can limit access to information and assistance

Upcoming

- New short courses in:
  - Sustainable livestock production
  - Season extension
  - Small Dairy Operations
  - Seed saving
- Hmong filming projects (audiovisual resources)
- Additional bilingual farm walks and workshops
- Credit for WSU/Tilth Farm Walk Series
- More online self-study options
- WSU organic degree courses online
- Extensive evaluations with past students

To Find Out More...

www.cultivatingsuccess.org