Outreach Methodologies for Small Farmers — what works, what doesn’t

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California Small Farms

- Each Ag Census reports significantly fewer small farms in California and the U.S. In 1964, there were 73,809 small farms in California compared to 67,327 in 2002 and 68,420 in 2007. Approximately 85% of all farms in California are classified as small farms (grossing less than $250,000).

Fresno County Small Farms

- 4,738 farms are classified as small farms
- Almost half are minority operated
  - Hispanics make up about 54% of minority farms
  - Asians make up about 40%

- Fresno has approximately 1,300 Hmong immigrant farmers from Laos/Thailand which make up 62% of the Asian farms. They have been immigrating to California since 1975. About 15,000 more Hmong refugees are being allowed to come to the U.S. from a Buddhist camp in Thailand.
Outreach Methodologies

1. One-on-one Farm Visits

- Very good
- the most effective
- Not very efficient

- Do not – share secrets or information about one farmer with others

Hmong CE assistant giving advice to Hmong farmer on insect identification
2. Ethnic Radio - Television

- Fairly effective, very efficient - especially if there are only 1-2 stations in the community

- Radio is less expensive than television
  - Seems to work better with Hmong farmers than Hispanic farmers in Fresno

- Suggestion: Have a person broadcast in specific language of the listeners AND have a regularly scheduled broadcast

Partners include UC Small Farm Center, USDA-FSA, USDA-RMA

2008: 1 year costs $2,730 (split 3 ways) – for 26, half-hour shows

2009 update: $4,420 for 52 shows, 1-hour long
3. Walk-in Office Visits, Telephone

- A place for farmers to go for help
- Message machine in several languages
4. Group Meetings – field days

- If translating, have separate meetings for different groups, otherwise the meeting is too long.

- If at all possible, conduct the meeting entirely in clientele language without having to translate.

- Consider using headsets.
Using headsets

- **Frequencies** = If using multiple languages make sure sets have different frequencies

- Some sets have rechargeable batteries (best), others require changing AA batteries (costly)

- Best to have the ear muff type rather than those you insert into the ear.
5. **Written Materials, Handouts**

- These work best with CBO supervisors or train-the-trainer programs.

- Suggestion: If they are used, they should be short, and with pictures.

- It must be emphasized that you know the clientele reading capabilities—educational level.
A Grower’s Guide to Pesticide Safety

(CAMBODIAN)

(LAO)

(HMONG)
6. Conduct Research Trials on their Farm

- Helps in the results adoption process
7. Offer Gadgets, Gizmos, & Attention Getters:

- free soil tests (ph, salt)
- free pest diagnosis
  - free hands lenses (80¢ each)
  - free nitrogen ‘quick’ tests
8. Audio or Video Cassettes, DVD’s

- Very useful for clientele unable to read. Seeing and hearing are very effective tools.
- Video cassettes can be quite expensive ~$10,000

*The audio soundtrack can be recorded off of the video cassette*
Dale’s Cone of Experience

People Generally Remember:

- 10% of what they Read
- 20% of what they Hear
- 30% of what they See
- 50% of what they hear and see
- 70% of what they say and write
- 90% of what they do

People Are Able To: (Learning Outcomes)

- Define
  - List
- Describe
  - Explain
- Demonstrate
  - Apply
  - Practice
- Analyze
  - Design
  - Create
  - Evaluate

- Participate in Hands-On Workshop
- Design Collaborative Lessons
- Simulate or Model a Real Experience
- Design/Perform a Presentation - Do The Real Thing

Source: ©Raymond S. Pastore, Ph.D. Bloomsburg University, Pennsylvania
9. Partnerships

- Expanded contacts
- Expanded information
- Ideas
- Adds more credibility
Many extension outreach techniques are used to disseminate information to small farmers. Which methodology is used may vary from group to group depending on ethnicities, available media in the area, resources available to the communicator, and recipient characteristics (age, gender, education).

Employing a Hmong assistant has contributed immensely to the success of the small farm program for Asians in Fresno County, California. Besides helping to establish trust with the community and being fluent in their languages, he makes numerous trips out to their farms with the farm advisor to assist them with problems.

Radio has been the most efficient method utilized by UC Cooperative Extension for ‘Hmong’ small farmers. Developing partnerships with USDA-FSA and USDA-RMA for the radio broadcasts has contributed to the diversity in topics and resulted in greater visibility for all of the organizations and additional benefits to farmers.
Summary

- Hiring someone from their community and fluent in their language is a great asset. Highly recommended!!
- Have consistency of programs initiated and be in it for the long haul. Immigrant and minority farmers see a lot of short-term projects (one year or less) and begin to wonder if the project is for them or more for the sponsor.
- Gain the trust of the group by doing 1 & 2 above, and also getting involved in some of their activities, i.e., Hmong new year booths or displays.
- Respect their culture and customs. (It is important to know the clan leaders, if there are any.)
- Make an attempt to learn some words/phrases in their language.
- Develop partnerships with CBO’s, government agencies, colleges, etc.
The Hmong New Year – Dec 26