REACHING NEW/BEGINNING FARMERS

PRE-CONFERENCE SHORT COURSE
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ABSTRACT

This pre-conference training will:

- Explore who beginning/new farmers are and their characteristics and challenges.
- Look at special populations of beginning farmers, such as immigrant farmers and socially disadvantaged farmers.
- Look at traditional and new outreach methods, and what kinds of messaging are most effective.
- Offer opportunities for participants to explore and improve their outreach efforts.
1. INTRODUCTION

- Purpose
- Overview
- Who’s in the audience
II. WHO ARE BEGINNING/NEW FARMERS?

- Typologies (USDA, Farm Credit, Growing New Farmers)
- Characteristics and learning preferences
- Needs
- New farmer programming (targeted versus relevant)
- Q&A/Discussion
II. WHO ARE BEGINNING/NEW FARMERS (CONT.)

- Definitions
  - Farming and Ranching: commercially motivated (Not “hobby” or “backyard”)
II. WHO ARE BEGINNING/NEW FARMERS (CONT.)

Definitions (Cont.)

- USDA Beginning farmer:
  - A Beginning Farmer or Rancher means an **individual** or **entity** who:
    a. Has not operated a farm or ranch, or who has operated a farm or ranch for not more than 10 consecutive years. This requirement applies to all members of an entity.
    b. Will materially and substantially participate in the operation of the farm or ranch.
II. WHO ARE BEGINNING/NEW FARMERS (CONT.)

- Definitions (Cont.)
  - Young Farmer:
    - A young farmer is a farmer under the age of 35. The Farm Bureau and Farm Credit have young farmer programs.
    - A young farmer may be working with the older generation on the family farm.
II. WHO ARE BEGINNING/NEW FARMERS (CONT.)

Definitions (Cont.)

- **Next-Generation farmer:**
  - Young persons who will be the next generation of farmers.
  - Sometimes the term specifically suggests the next generation of the family to take over an existing farm.
II. WHO ARE BEGINNING/NEW FARMERS (CONT.)

- Typology (Growing New Farmers)
  - Prospective Farmer:
    - Has not yet begun to farm
    - There are three categories:
      - Recruits
      - Explorers
      - Planners
II. WHO ARE BEGINNING/NEW FARMERS (CONT.)

Typologies (Cont.)

“Recruits”

- Might consider a career in production agriculture
- For example students in vo-ag high schools
II. WHO ARE BEGINNING/NEW FARMERS (CONT.)

Typologies (Cont.)

- “Explorers”
  - Are investigating a farming future
  - May be gathering information, making connections
II. WHO ARE BEGINNING/NEW FARMERS (CONT.)

- Typologies (Cont.)
  - “Planners”
    - Have made a choice to pursue some sort of commercial production agriculture
    - Not actually farming yet
    - Actively gathering information and resources; seeking land and finances
II. WHO ARE BEGINNING/NEW FARMERS (CONT.)

- Typologies (Cont.)
  - Beginning Farmers
    - There are three categories
      - Start-ups
      - Re-strategizers
      - Establishing
II. WHO ARE BEGINNING/NEW FARMERS (CONT.)

- **Typologies (Cont.)**
  - **Beginning Farmers (Cont.)**
    - “Start-Ups”
      - Have been farming for three years or less.
    - “Re-strategizers”
      - Making adjustments in their fourth to seventh years.
  - “Establishing”
    - Stabilizing in years eight to ten of the beginning farmer phase
II. WHO ARE BEGINNING/NEW FARMERS (CONT.)

- Typologies (Cont.)
  - Demographics
    - Young non-farming background
    - Young farming background
    - Next-generation on the farm
    - Career changers
    - Geography (rural, peri-urban, urban)
II. WHO ARE BEGINNING/NEW FARMERS (CONT.)

Typologies (Cont.)
- Limited resource (definition)
- Minority
- Women
- Immigrant
- Ethnic group
II. WHO ARE BEGINNING/NEW FARMERS (CONT.)

○ Characteristics
  ● Background and Expertise
    ○ Farming skills and knowledge
    ○ Farm management expertise
    ○ Farming background
II. WHO ARE BEGINNING/NEW FARMERS (CONT.)

- Characteristics (Cont.)
  - Assets and Resources
    - Degree or stage of commitment to farming
    - Family/community support and connection to networks
    - Resources (land, capital, etc.)
II. WHO ARE BEGINNING/NEW FARMERS (CONT.)

Characteristics (Cont.)

- Livelihood Goals
  - Percent time farming
  - Standard of living
  - Decision-making and risk role
II. WHO ARE BEGINNING/NEW FARMERS (CONT.)

- Characteristics (Cont.)
  - Business Goals
    - Production system and philosophy
    - % HH income from farming
    - Marketing strategy(ies)
II. WHO ARE BEGINNING/NEW FARMERS (CONT.)

- Learning Preferences
  - HANDS-ON experience
  - From other farmers
  - Targeted
  - Contemporary (electronic)
II. WHO ARE BEGINNING/NEW FARMERS (CONT.)

Provider Functions

- *Recruiting*: awareness, opportunities, information
- *Training/educating*: skills and knowledge
- *Advising*: resources and information
- *Consulting*: technical and business support
- *Counseling*: support, networking
II. WHO ARE BEGINNING/NEW FARMERS (CONT.)

- Needs
  - Audience: Who? (typology)
  - Content: What?
  - Accessibility: How? Where? When?
II. WHO ARE BEGINNING/NEW FARMERS (CONT.)

- New Farmer Programming
  - Content
    - Targeted versus relevant
    - Introductory
    - Hands-on/practical/experience
    - Production information/education
    - Financial services
    - Marketing
    - Business planning
    - Land access
    - Special interest/topics
III. Special populations of new farmers

- Special Populations of New Farmers
  - Immigrant Farmers
  - Minority Farmers
  - Unique Characteristics
  - Unique Needs

- Q&A/Discussion
III. SPECIAL POPULATIONS OF NEW FARMERS (CONT.)

- **Immigrant Farmers**
  - Asian (i.e. Hmong, Koreans, etc.)
  - African (i.e., Somalis, Sudanese, etc.)
  - Caribbean (i.e., Jamaicans, etc.)
  - Hispanic (i.e., Mexicans, Chileans, etc.)
  - For more information, browse NIFI—New Immigrant Farming Initiative
III. SPECIAL POPULATIONS OF NEW FARMERS (CONT.)

- Minority Farmers
  - African American
  - Native American
  - Asian American
  - Hispanic American
  - Women
III. SPECIAL POPULATIONS OF NEW FARMERS (CONT.)

- Unique Characteristics
  - Lifestyle
  - Cultural barrier
  - Language barrier
  - Limited resources
  - Lack of connections and networking
  - Unaware of government programs
III. Special Populations of New Farmers (Cont.)

- Unique Needs
  - Programs tailored to farmers’ lifestyle to fit their schedule
  - American culture training needs
  - English language training needs
  - Special agriculture and agriculture-related courses
    - Ag 101 and Marketing 101
    - Risk management tools
III. Special populations of new farmers (Cont.)

- Needs (Cont.)
  - Offer more opportunities since limited-resource farmers (i.e., grant writing, govt. loans, etc.)
  - Provide information on local, state, and federal government programs
  - Provide networking opportunities (i.e., NIFI)

- Q&A/Discussion
IV. How to reach new farmers

- How to reach new farmers
  - Challenges to reaching new farmers
    - Lifestyle/scheduling
    - Cultural
    - Language, messaging
    - Resources (time and money)
    - Accessibility
IV. HOW TO REACH NEW FARMERS

- Outreach methods: what works?
  - Land grant/Extension approach
  - Other educational institutions (e.g., community colleges, high school)
  - NGO/community-based approaches
  - Internet-based
  - Other partners
- Q&A/Discussion
IV. HOW TO REACH NEW FARMERS (CONT.)

- **Challenge to reaching new farmers**
  - **Lifestyle/scheduling**
    - Need to be creative in scheduling programs since most new farmers have non-farm occupations
    - This may require meetings on week-ends
  - **Cultural**
    - Need to be sensitive to new farmers’ culture
    - Winning their trust could help reach them more effectively
IV. How to Reach New Farmers (Cont.)

- Challenge to reaching new farmers
  - Language
    - Language barrier can be overcome by providing interpret service
    - Brochures/publications in foreign languages should be used
IV. How to Reach New Farmers (Cont.)

- Challenge to reaching new farmers
  - Resource
    - Time
      - Create Time for new farmers
      - Work around their schedule
  - Money
    - Leverage resource across agencies
    - Go after grants to bring in additional money
IV. HOW TO REACH NEW FARMERS (CONT.)

- Challenge to reaching new farmers (Cont.)
  - Accessibility
    - Geography
  - Outreach
    - Finding your audience
    - Audience finding your information
    - How it’s presented
    - Media
IV. HOW TO REACH NEW FARMERS (CONT.)

- Outreach Methods: What Works?
  - Land-Grant/Extension Approaches
    - County Extension Agent Model
      - One-on-one methods
      - Farmer focus groups
      - Workshops and seminars
      - Trials and demonstrations
      - On-farm research projects
      - Networking events
    - Special Programs Targeted to New Farmers
IV. How to Reach New Farmers (Cont.)

- Outreach Methods (Cont.)
  - Other Educational Institutions
    - Community colleges
    - Private colleges and universities
    - High schools
IV. HOW TO REACH NEW FARMERS (CONT.)

- Outreach Methods (Cont.)
  - NGO/Community-Based Approach
    - Apprentice networks (e.g., CRAFT)
    - NGO programs (site-based and not)
    - Conferences, meetings, workshops
    - Bulletin boards
    - Advertisements
    - The “Greenhorns”
IV. HOW TO REACH NEW FARMERS (CONT.)

- Outreach Methods (Cont.)
  - Internet-Based Approach
    - Web/Social networking sites
    - Online courses and tutorials
    - Blogs, YouTube, Facebook
    - Other organization’s links
    - Online newsletters (others or your own, e.g. Constant Contact)
    - List serves
IV. HOW TO REACH NEW FARMERS (CONT.)

Outreach Methods (Cont.)

- Other Partners
  - USDA agencies
  - NGOs
  - Farm organizations
  - State Departments of Agriculture
  - “Buy local” groups
IV. HOW TO REACH NEW FARMERS (CONT.)

Outreach Methods (Cont.)

- Other Partners
  - RC&D; Natural Resource Conservation Districts
  - Conservation community
  - Lenders
  - Dealers, suppliers
  - Other beginning farmers/leaders
  - Community education programs
  - FFA and 4-H
V. INTERACTIVE/EXERCISE

Interactive Exercise

- Who are you trying to reach? What are their characteristics?
- What is the program?
- What are your outreach options?
VI. Wrap-up

- Wrap-up
  - Resources
    - References
    - Useful Links
    - Related Publications
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  [http://umes.edu/Agriculture/Content.aspx?id=3136](http://umes.edu/Agriculture/Content.aspx?id=3136)

- Small Farm Specialist

  [http://extension.umd.edu/agriculture/smallfarms/program.cfm](http://extension.umd.edu/agriculture/smallfarms/program.cfm)
THANK YOU