A Collective Approach to Providing Resources, Technology and Assistance to Beginning Farmers

Presenting state: Alabama
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What is Collective Impact?

- Stakeholders align with each other in a collective sense of purpose, with a common goal.
- Each stakeholder is impelled to specify its role in achieving the common goal.
- Shared performance measures provide participants accountability and insight.

Project Audience

- Beginning producers in Alabama
- Extension surveys: 27% new producers, 47% naturally grown, 16% organic producer, 10% gardeners
- Focus on fruit and vegetable production
- Will also reach input providers, food hubs, and other state organizations
Key Partners/Collaborators

– Alabama Extension Commercial Hort. (people + technology)
– Jayme Oates, Farmscape Solutions, Project Coordinator
– Karen Wynne, Crotovina Inc.
– Southern Sustainable Agriculture Working Group
– Alabama Fruit and Vegetable Growers Association
– Alabama Sustainable Agriculture Network

Program sustainability will be enhanced by…
– Including food hubs and other marketing outlets, input suppliers, aggregators, distributors, AL Dept of Ag, Farmers Market Authority, key or mentoring farmers, AL Farmers Federation
Key Approaches

BF Program Action/Strategic Model

Core planning team (CPT)

Core evaluation team (CET): Monitoring & Evaluation System

Stakeholder advisory committee input

Inputs

Alabama Extension
Incubator farms/Producer Networks
Producer organizations

Train-the-trainer
Farmer-to-farmer
Technical assistance-to-farmer

Outputs

Transformational education
Technical services

Online resources
On-farm Demonstrations
Extension Agents
Technical Assistance Providers

Technology transfer system
Farm services system

Impacts: 60 beginning farms (direct), 2000 indirect beneficiaries

Outcomes

Impacts
Transformation education model - ACES
Key Deliverables

Technology transfer methods:
Website (www.aces.edu/beginningfarms)
Electronic curriculum and new bulletins (ACES)
Phone app development (ACES)
Workshops/courses/demonstrations (ACES & partners)
Incubator farm/apprenticeships (Crotovina/FS & partners)
Mentoring (Crotovina/FS & partners)
Promotional materials (ACES)

Support services:
Reactive on-farm training (ACES/FS/Crotovina)
Organizational Networking and Evaluations (various)
Major Target Outcomes (three years)

• Technical Assistance Providers (TAPs) will assist 60 beginning farmers directly with clear production, marketing, and business plans.

• Will also benefit 2000 indirect participants (20% socially disadvantaged and 10% veterans)

• 100% direct and 50% indirect participants will improve their knowledge from hands-on training/workshops.

• 25% or more indirect participants will use web-based training materials

• 50% participants will use crop production and pest management recommendations.
Utilization-focused Evaluation Strategy

Needs assessments

Modified outputs

Process evaluations (formative)

Outcome evaluations

Impact evaluations (summative)

Modified strategy

Project monitoring

Project improvement
What do you hope to learn from other projects?

- Curriculum or resources?
- Expertise in certain topics?
- Realistic expectations
- Measures of success
- Experiences of others using the Collective Impact Model
Keep in touch!

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