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Virginia State University College of Agriculture Cooperative Extension Small Farm Outreach Program Petersburg, VA



Project Description In 2021, Southern Extension Risk Management Education Center awarded Virginia State University Small Farm Outreach Program (VSU-SFOP) \$50,000 to conduct risk management training for socially disadvantaged, veteran, and beginning farmers and ranchers (SDBVFR) in Virginia.

Needs Assessment

The VSU-SFOP conducts an annual evaluation of all our small farm programming areas. In 2020, 238 producers participating in VSU-SFOP programs were asked what risk areas they wanted addressed (Table 1).

Table 1. Producer Risk Education Needs

Marketing	29% (69)
Production	24% (57)
Financial	16% (38)
Crop Insurance	13% (30)

Actions Taken

The VSU-SFOP staff addressed SDBVFR producer risk needs through the following delivery methods:

- 🚜 Workshops
- 🚜 Hands-on demonstrations
- 🚜 Farm/market tours
- 🚜 One-on-one home/farm consultations

Table 2. Risk Management Education Focus Area Activities and Results

VSU-SFOP SDBVFR Risk Management Education Focus Area Activities and Results				
Focus Area	Production Risk	Financial Risk	Marketing Risk	Crop Insurance Risk
Activities Conducted	30 Workshops Conducted on Specialty Crops and Livestock, Urban, Sustainable, and Organic Methods	28 Workshops Conducted on Business Plan Writing, Financial Recordkeeping, Liability, Access to Capital	12 Workshops; Seven Demonstrations/Farm Tours; 61 one on one consultations on market access, market planning, market outlets, effective sales strategies	Five USDA Outreach Program Workshops on available USDA Services, including Crop Insurance
Results	710 Participants 97% (688) Producers planned to incorporate new production practices	405 Participants 94% (380) Producers learned how to improve their financial stability	185 Participants 33% (61) Producers adopted new marketing strategies in their operation	167 Participants 20% (33) enrolled in a Crop Insurance Program

Program Evaluation

Participant evaluation highlights:

- 🚜 100% indicated they would use information to improve marketing strategies
- 🚜 97% planned to incorporate information learned to enhance their operation
- 🚜 94% gained knowledge to improved financial stability



Program Impacts

Participant Impact highlights:

- 🚜 100% increased understanding of business record keeping, farm plans, financial planning and management
- 🚜 56% improved soil health
- 🚜 50% improved time efficiency
- 🚜 33% improved marketing skills
- 🚜 33% adopted new marketing strategies
- 🚜 20% enrolled in crop insurance program
- 🚜 15% reduced labor costs