



Homefront to Heartland: Empowering Women in Agriculture

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Project Introduction

Expended Amount: \$29,575

Women play a vital role in family farms as operators, household managers and/or off-farm earners. This project utilized online and face-to-face learning opportunities to address the financial, human and legal risks these women face. Through the learning opportunities, the project reached 132 participants (including 4% minorities). Major educational efforts included three regional workshops, quarterly newsletters and web site/social media network.

As a result of these efforts, 132 individuals learned how to reduce risks in their current farm operation; 86 women developed/enhanced their record keeping system; 87 women applied better stress management strategies in their daily lives; and 66 women applied (or anticipate applying) for a new source of funding for their operations.

Project Participants

The project participants consisted of 132 women involved in agriculture and/or small business. A vast majority of these individuals were either primary agricultural operators or the spouse/partner of primary agricultural operators. The project participants had indicated through previous focus group studies a need for education related to financial management, record keeping, risk management and the management of human resources.

Project Area

The scope of this project focused on women in agriculture in Tennessee. Three regional workshops were held in each of the three Extension regions in Tennessee.

Project Outcomes

A follow-up survey was conducted with workshop participants. As a result of participating in Homefront to Heartland programming:

- 65% of participants developed or improved a record keeping system.
- 73% of participants created or modified a family spending plan.
- 73% of participants set a new savings and/or investment goal.
- 66% of participants report applying better stress management techniques.
- 46% of participants developed a comprehensive whole-farms financial plan for their operation.
- 50% of participants applied (or anticipate applying) for a new source of funding.
- 35% of participants modified hiring, training, evaluation and/or recognition practices for their employees. Based on conference topics such as labor management, funding, increasing income and better financial management practices, conference participants estimated \$211,479 in economic benefit to their business and/or personal lives.

■ Quotes

“This was one of the most informative and one of the best workshops I’ve been to. A lot of hard work went into this and everyone seemed to really enjoy it.”

Knoxville Workshop Participant

“I love these workshops! I get energized from being with like-minded people. I’m a 5th-generation farmer’s daughter.”

Knoxville Workshop Participant

“I will be able to go back home and be able to keep better records, figure out if we want to expand our farm business and I now know where to get help financially, etc.”

Jackson Workshop Participant

■ Project Success Story

Stephanie had been involved in agriculture for all her life – growing up on a family farm in East Tennessee. Recently, she had made the transition from her direct involvement in production agriculture to the opening of a farm stand/retail store. This transition was challenging for Stephanie and her family, yet this had been a dream of hers for as long as she could remember. One challenge that had been facing her was the need to diversify the products she was offering for sale in her retail store. While she had reliable suppliers for many of the agricultural products, she did not have supplier relationships for other items she had hoped to offer – items such as additional value-added products and home-made candles. In the fall, Stephanie attended a Homefront to Heartland workshop offered in her area. While she reported that she learned a good deal of information at the workshop, she believes that the greatest result of her participation was the contacts she made – particularly the contact she made with a fellow business owner. Based on this connection, she has established a relationship with this new business owner and is now offering some of her products in her shop. This connection according to Stephanie has been valuable to her operation.

***Sandra Martini, H. L. Goodwin** and **Ronald L. Rainey**, Grant Coordinator and Co-Directors, respectively, of the Southern Risk Management Education Center, serve as editors of this report series. To learn more about risk management education programs and resources, visit the Southern Center web site (<http://srmec.uark.edu>) or the Extension Risk Management Education Program link (www.extensionrme.org).

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