

## Promotion of Local, Sustainable Agriculture through *Making It Grow!*

### State Situation -- Program is directed a state-wide audience

All information in italics below is copied directly from the report prepared by the Darla Moore School of Business, University of South Carolina, Division of Research, in a paper titled ***The Economic Impact of Agribusiness and the Return of the Certified South Carolina Grown Program.***

*According to the U.S. Census of Agriculture, South Carolina has approximately 20 million acres of land. Of that, 4.85 million (25.1 percent) is farmland.*

*Cropland and woodland (including woodland pasture) account for 46.8 percent and 38.2 percent of farmland, respectively, with the remainder divided among rangeland, house lots, ponds, roads and wasteland.*

*From 1995 to 2006, the number of farms increased, with the average size of farms decreasing to 197 acres by 2006, or 44.2 percent of the national average size. In 2002, 93 percent of South Carolina's farms were individually or family owned, with 18,476 of the state's 20,541 farmers being full owners. The number of corporate farms in South Carolina decreased by 26 percent from 1997 to 2002.*

*The total net farm income for 2006 was \$722 million, yielding an average farm income of \$29,400. This number remained relatively constant, between \$29,000 and \$30,000, during the period 2000-2006, except for 2002, when the average dropped to \$9,800 (Carpio, Hughes and Isengildna 2008a).*

#### AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION AND FOOD PROCESSING

*Agricultural production and food processing are particularly important industries in South Carolina. In 2006, total cash receipts from agricultural commodities reached \$2.1 billion, a nominal increase of 26 percent for 2000. Crop and animal production increased by 23 percent from \$531 million in 1997 to \$655 million in 2005. In 2006, South Carolina exported agricultural and livestock products to 49 countries, totaling \$232 million in exports (Carpio, Hughes and Isengildna 2008a).*

#### MAJOR AGRIBUSINESS PRODUCTS

*South Carolina is one of the nation's leading producers of peaches, tobacco, peanuts, watermelons, cantaloupe, cucumbers, turkeys, tomatoes, and broilers. Of the \$2.1 billion in cash receipts, five commodities—broilers, green industry (greenhouse, nursery, floriculture), turkeys, cattle and calves, and cotton production—accounted for more than 67 percent, with each contributing more than \$100 million in cash receipts.*

#### FOOD AND OTHER PROCESSING

*Food processing offers an opportunity to add value to agricultural products grown in South Carolina. Of the 33 agribusiness processing sectors in South Carolina, two had per worker earned incomes that exceeded their U.S. counterparts. Two of the agribusiness sectors that showed growth nationally had a large presence in the state: poultry processing with 8,869 jobs and frozen food manufacturing with 1,220 jobs. Overall, 14 of the 33 agribusiness processing sectors had growth in earned income from 2001 to 2006; however, nine of those*

sectors had fewer than 250 workers. Two of those sectors, poultry processing and non-poultry slaughter, showed growth of 26.6 percent and 22.5 percent, respectively, and employed 10,194 workers.

#### **THE ECONOMIC IMPACT OF AGRIBUSINESS**

*The three core agribusiness sectors—farming, food processing and forest-based products—accounted for \$11.6 billion in economic activity measured by gross state product (GSP) in 2006 (latest figures. The agribusiness GSP contribution to the state’s economy comprises 7.9 percent of total economic activity in South Carolina (\$11.6 billion of a total \$146.3 billion in gross state product) (Carpio, Hughes and Isengildna 2008a).*

*Employment is the most easily understood measure of economic activity. Recent studies estimate that agribusiness—including forestry, agriculture, and manufacturing related to farming—directly employed 98,425 South Carolinians in 2006, with indirect employment contributing an additional 89,892 employees. The average earned income for total state earned income and 93 percent of workers associated with agribusiness was \$36,814, amounting to 7.3 percent of the state average of \$39,611. [4,625,364 SC population in 2010]*

*Next consider the direct and total economic impact of this important sector of the state’s economy. The agribusiness direct output for 2006 was \$20.5 billion. Through the economic multiplier effect this yields a total output of \$30.3 billion, meaning \$1 in sales in this sector led to \$1.48 in sales throughout the state economy.*

### **Attitudes towards Agriculture**

In this award entry, I tried to find researched information about consumers’ attitudes towards locally and sustainably grown crops and value-added products as that is the segment of the market we are trying to impact with our selection of guests and segments aired on *Making It Grow!* Excerpts from the research done by the Moore School of Business and Clemson Extension’s Geoff Zehnder (director of the Sustainable Ag program) both indicate a growing interest in and demand for locally, sustainably produced food.

*Carpio and Isengildina-Massa (2008b) evaluated South Carolina’s consumer preferences and the demand for South Carolina grown products. A survey of 500 South Carolina consumers was conducted in order to measure the attitudes and perceptions of the consumers concerning South Carolina grown agricultural products. The study’s findings state that South Carolina consumers have a strong demand for local grown products. The survey results found that South Carolina consumers are willing to pay on average a premium around 27 percent for South Carolina State grown produce and around 23 percent for South Carolina local animal products. Under the assumption of total awareness of the campaign [Certified South Carolina, SC Dept. of Agriculture marketing program] by all consumers, that number increased to 7.1 percent for produce and 4.4 percent for animal products. The 7.1 percent increase in the premium consumers were willing to pay has a long run effect of a \$2.9 million increase in producer surplus, meaning that for every dollar of the initial \$500,000 grant, there would be a return of \$5.8 (South Carolina Grown, 2009)*

End of material taken from Moore Business School report.

The following text (reproduced in a different font) is from a study led by Geoff Zehnder of Clemson University.

Geoff Zehnder  
Professor of Entomology  
Coordinator, IPM and Sustainable Agriculture Programs  
Clemson University  
Clemson, South Carolina  
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### **An Assessment of Consumer Preferences for IPM- and Organically Grown Produce Abstract**

Our study assessed local consumer preferences for IPM- and organically grown produce to determine if market opportunities exist for these products. The majority of those surveyed expressed concern about the health effects of pesticide residues on produce. Results also indicate that consumers would preferentially purchase IPM or organic produce if labels/information were provided at the point of sale to reflect pest management practices. Survey respondents indicated a willingness to pay more for IPM/organic produce than for conventionally grown produce, even if the IPM/organic produce had slight cosmetic blemishes.

South Carolina is experiencing unprecedented rates in growth of acreage converted from farmland into developed land status. From 1992 to 1997, 30.2% of South Carolina farm and forestland was converted for development (London & Hill, 2000). This ranks South Carolina 6th in the nation among states in this category, and the rate of development and loss of farmland is expected to continue.

Concurrent with development has been an increase in land values and property tax rates, making it more difficult for farmers to maintain profitable enterprises. Farmers on small acreage farms typical of South Carolina (average size approximately 200 acres) can no longer survive economically solely by growing and marketing conventional, low-value row crops. Thus, farmers are interested in alternative niche market crops where the per-acre profit potential is high.

These results indicate that local market opportunities exist for IPM/organic produce and that consumer preferences for IPM and organic produce were similar. Results from Question #1 suggest that the majority of consumers are concerned about the health effects of pesticide residues on produce and that, if given a choice, they would prefer to purchase produce grown using IPM or organic farming practices compared with conventionally produced produce.

A large majority of respondents (84.2%) indicated a willingness to purchase produce with slight cosmetic blemishes if they had knowledge that the product was produced with little or no pesticides. One of the main constraints to production and marketing of IPM/organic produce is the difficulty in maintaining high standards for appearance with limited or zero use of pesticides.

Survey results indicated that consumers would accept produce with slight blemishes provided that they had knowledge that IPM/organic practices were used. Survey results also indicate that consumers would be willing to pay more for IPM/organic produce than for conventionally grown produce, even if the IPM/organic produce had slight cosmetic blemishes. Based on survey responses, an acceptable price premium would be in the 5-15% range, although a small percentage would pay 25% more for IPM/organic produce.

End of Zehnder and colleagues study.

## **PUBLIC RELATIONS OBJECTIVES**

*Making It Grow!*, is S.C. Educational Television's longest running and most popular locally produced program, dedicated to providing researched-based, environmental education concerning home landscaping and garden. In recent years we have made the promotion of locally grown or value added products a goal of our programming decisions.

"The Certified South Carolina program is a cooperative effort among producers, processors, wholesalers, retailers and the South Carolina Department of Agriculture (SCDA) to brand and promote South Carolina products. Our goal is for consumers to be able to easily identify, find and buy South Carolina products." SC State Department of Agriculture brochure

One aspect of the Certified South Carolina program is underwriting sponsorship of *Making It Grow!* by the South Carolina Department of Agriculture. In yearly meetings I hold with the Assistant Commissioner and the Director of the SC Specialty Foods Association, we discuss how to best promote South Carolina agriculture, with special interest on the South Carolina Specialty Food Association's Certified South Carolina Food Program. For the past three years, we have had a monthly interview during the live television broadcast with the director of the program, Jackie Moore, who is accompanied by a member of that certified program who has been chosen to promote his/her product.

The rationale behind the SC Department of Agriculture support for *Making It Grow!* and the promotion of the Specialty Foods project is documented in the above mentioned survey by the University of South Carolina Moore School of Business: Again, material in italics is copied directly from ***The Economic Impact of Agribusiness and the Return of the Certified South Carolina Grown Program.***

*To help determine the potential for Certified South Carolina to grow the economy over the next decade, the study assessed South Carolina's neighbors in terms of local agribusiness purchases. It will be seen that if South Carolina reaches the share of locally sourced demand for major farm products similar to neighboring states, there will be an increase in demand of about \$335 million for the state's economy that would otherwise not be there. The total economic impact for the South Carolina economy is around \$558 million. This increase in local demand would add approximately 10,000 jobs to the S.C. economy. These are annual impacts, so they would bolster the state economy by these amounts every year.*

*At a time when the South Carolina's employment opportunities are contracting at an alarming rate, these new jobs are crucial to stimulating the overall economy. The research in this report*

*also shows that the Palmetto state's economy will grow along with the Certified South Carolina Grown campaign. Higher local consumption of food--bolstered by state-supported Certified South Carolina Grown—engenders substantially higher levels of private sector business activity.*

*Next consider the potential for growth in farm products through greater local consumption of South Carolina-produced food. **This is the goal of the SCDA's Certified South Carolina initiative. A movement to buy more local food has swept across the United States in the past decade. The result has been to bolster local food systems, once a mainstay of U.S. agribusiness. Local food systems include the sale of local products to local markets. The main focus of these systems is to emphasize the origin of the product. Consumers want to be confident that the produce they are buying is the best option. There are many benefits that supporters claim exist from these local food systems, including access to fresher, more nutritional food options, and an increase in both social and economic activity.***

*The existence of local food systems creates strong linkages between the local farmers and consumers. Supporters also point out that there are environmental benefits from the existence of local food systems, for example, the reduction in transportation can lead to less pollution and less energy use.*

***The main objective for the South Carolina local campaign is to reach all consumers. Technology plays a major role in making the agriculture information available to consumers. Research shows that if all consumers are informed about the South Carolina campaign the total sales could increase for local produce and animal products by about \$17 million dollars per year. [Emphasis added by the submitter.]***

## **Program Execution**

I am the host of *Making It Grow!*, S.C. Educational Television's longest running and most popular locally produced program, which is dedicated to providing researched-based, environmental education concerning home landscaping and gardening. The format is the show is a live, hour-long, program with calls coming from South Carolina and parts of North Carolina and Georgia. A panel of horticultural experts, with my leadership, answers questions. We also have taped field segments highlighting a particular person, business, or agricultural practice in the State (I identify the subject and conduct the interviews for these off-site visits.) Additionally, each show has a side counter episode during which an invited guest introduces a product, such as a value added food item; or an agent describes and demonstrates a horticultural practice such proper pruning of muscadines.

As a full-time Clemson Cooperative Extension agent, I am responsible for inviting the panel who sit with me to answer call in questions. I attend workshops and seminars on trends in agricultural production, particularly sustainable and organic, to better represent those local niche growers/producers whom we highlight. I research and coordinate the selection of persons, places, and horticultural best management practices that we that we visit for off-site filming or highlight during the live show.

Additionally, we promote Clemson Extension's on-line resource of gardening/landscaping factsheets by having a "HGIC Question of the Week [Home Garden Information Center]," with viewers selecting their answer on-line and with the correct answer and link given at the end of the program. The University of

South Carolina Herbarium director educates viewers with plants, both native and exotic, with the weekly “Mystery Plant” puzzler.

Interactivity is promoted with a live chat room which operates throughout the show with an Extension agent moderator who is a part of the back and forth conversation.

**All these activities are designed to attract a large and diverse audience.** Our viewers include dedicated gardeners, farmers, and also those who simply enjoy the format of a live, locally-based program during which we mix a relaxed and spontaneous conversation but with the underpinning of research-based information. Our viewers know they can trust the information we give on our program, a fact which helps bolster confidence in the South Carolina Certified/Specialty Foods members whom we highlight.

“The Certified South Carolina program is a cooperative effort among producers, processors, wholesalers, retailers and the South Carolina Department of Agriculture (SCDA) to brand and promote South Carolina products. Our goal is for consumers to be able to easily identify, find and buy South Carolina products.” From the promotional brochure of the SC Department of Agriculture.

The South Carolina Department of Agriculture supports *Making It Grow!* as an underwriter. In yearly meetings with the Assistant Commissioner and the Director of the SC Specialty Foods Association, we discuss how to best promote South Carolina agriculture, with special interest on the South Carolina Specialty Food Association’s South Carolina Certified Food Program. For the past three years, we have had a monthly visit on the *Making It Grow!* program from the director of the program who is accompanied by a member.

During the show, we tease the audience with information about who our Certified SC guests are and what delicious product they have brought to the program. At one point in the evening, I leave my desk and join them, conducting an interview with them about their product, how is grown, produced, etc., and recipe or serving suggestions for it. We also give the website and contact information for the producer. All information is archived on our Facebook page and the entire segment is available for viewing on our website. The area of the set where the interviews are conducted has a display of SC Specialty Food Products which are seen by viewers during each Making It Grow! program.

For our weekly off-site segments that are pre-taped and aired during the show, I frequently select farmers, especially organic or niche farmers who are members of the Certified South Carolina Grown program, to visit and interview. We have visited a chestnut farmer, several organic CSA vegetable farms, a specialty breed cattle operation, an heirloom grits grower/manufacturer, the Clemson University Organic CSA campus farm, a public school GAP certified garden, a local small herd dairy producer, and several Certified South Carolina Roadside Market sites. Additionally, we have highlighted Extension specialists and their interaction with growers to reduce the amount of pesticides used on locally produced crops, stressing the research that promotes IPM practices to protect both the food supply and the environment.

I frequently attend festivals and farmers’ markets as a “marketing magnet,” wearing my now famous hats fashioned from plant material, vegetables, and/or flowers which are a much-enjoyed moment at the end of each show and featured in our Making It Grow! Facebook photo gallery.

## Results and Evaluation

*Making It Grow!* has an estimated audience of 150,000 viewers each week. The off-site segments, often visits to value-added producers or local, sustainable farmers, are also packaged in a separate program, *Best of Making It Grow!*, which airs each week.

We speak with South Carolina Certified /Specialty Foods guests after their appearance on the show. They invariably report an increase in hits to their website (they are required to have a website before appearing on the program). Producers with a retail outlet report increases in customers who say they heard about them on the program.

Perhaps most interesting are the reports that when a re-run is aired which includes a Specialty Food or Certified SC member we don't notify them. They, however, all say they can tell when that happens as they experience an increase in calls and orders.

Our *Making It Grow!* Facebook page has 5,392 "likes!" When a South Carolina Certified/Specialty Food member appears, we take numerous photographs of their products and the delicious and appealing recipes they prepare for the program. When we ask the visitor for contact information, which we display in a graphic, we also inform the audience that all the information can be found at our Facebook page, which drives the viewers to that sight.

Team *Making It Grow!* supports events organized by the Specialty Foods Association, helping with barbecue judging or appearing at State Farmers' Markets during special events days such as Flower Festivals. Once a year we schedule an appearance by the directors of the Certified SC Grown program (which targets fresh produce) and the value-added Specialty Foods Association together to explain their program, the support they can give to members, and how to join. They report an increase in inquiries after these programs.

Below are letters we have received about the value of this program.

### **From Jackie Moore, Director, SC Specialty Foods Association, SC Department of Agriculture**

Hi Amanda,

The South Carolina Department of Agriculture is proud to help underwrite *Making it Grow!* for its incredible support of SC Agriculture and the South Carolina Specialty Food Industry. I have only received positive comments from my SCSFA members who have been on your show with me for the past 5 years. It has been an business booming experience for them. Even the SCSFA website has grown to 645 'Likes' thanks largely to the show. Comments from SCSFA members that have been on the show include;

"I checked my website count before the show and after and I had over 100 hits by the time I got home that Tuesday evening." "I can tell when MIG! shows re-runs of my show, I get a spike in orders." "The show really helped me launch my product, and not only right after the show, but they are repeat customers that order time after time." "I have shown my products at Atlanta &

Washington DC shows, and people are so excited to try my products because they saw me on *Making it Grow!*"

*Making it Grow!* has not only helped the SCSFA members on the show but it has increased the number of people willing to follow their dream and start their own Specialty Food company, growing SC agriculture:)

Jackie Moore  
South Carolina Department of Agriculture

**From Sallie Dent Porth, *Sallie's Greatest***

Hi! Amanda,

I am reaching out to thank you and the staff of *Making It Grow* for all that your show has done for my business. Since my appearance now almost 2 years ago I still run into people while I am out doing tasting that tell me: "I saw you on *Making It Grow!*" They immediately connect with me since they saw me on the show. This always turns into greater sales for my product! They also have nothing but wonderful things to say about the show and how much they learn from the show and enjoy watching. This kind of endorsement for small startup businesses like mine is critical to our success. We appreciate all the support.

All the best,  
Sallie

Sallie Dent Porth  
***Sallie's Greatest***  
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**From Heidi Black, *Faithful Foods***

Amanda,

Just wanted to let you know what a tremendous response I have gotten from my appearance on "Making It Grow" and also from the on site filming y'all did about 6 years ago at our store when we were located at the The Old Mill in Lexington. Shortly after each appearance I was bombarded with phone calls, emails and web hits. The Old Mill even experienced a huge upsurge in new visitors because of the great story you did on one of Lexington's most Historic sites! Your show has a huge impact on so many people--from all over the US and well beyond! Due to MIG I have picked up orders, customers and retail accounts from a world of different places! You've been so helpful to The SC Specialty Food Association



(of which I am a board member and Midlands director)and all of our members are always delighted and most thankful to be included in a segment. Plus, I can't begin to tell you how many times I've heard "You were on 'Making It Grown' weren't you?" from customers at the fair, conferences I've attended and most recently, March 3rd when we displayed at the Charleston Wine and Food Festival. Usually in the same conversation I will also hear...."and don't you just love Amanda with those hats?" You all have made quite an impact on so many people and you're a jewel in our South Carolina Crown! I'm also happy to tell that after we were on last time I went home and told my husband how to fertilize our huge barren pecan tree (a topic of discussion that night!) so I'm looking forward to a bumper crop this year!!! Thanks again for all you do! I'm looking forward to more hats and valuable info too!

Thanks,  
Heidi Black  
Bringing You Baskets & Faithful Foods Inc.

[www.faithfulfoods.com](http://www.faithfulfoods.com)

[www.bringingyoubaskets.com](http://www.bringingyoubaskets.com)

Check us out on Facebook Faithful Foods, Inc. or Bringing You Baskets and Faithful Foods, Inc

### **From Pat Gallagher, Vegetable Kingdom**

Hi Amanda,

Making It Grow is a perfect way for small businesses like Vegetable Kingdom to reach a larger South Carolina public. Prior to the show, we advertised the fact that we would be on and before, during and after the show, we posted photos on our facebook page related to the show.

By the next morning, we received 30 new customers on our facebook page and also received several phone calls resulting in new customers interested in ordering our products. We are already looking forward to a future segment with you when you come to our kitchen and walk through our garden!

Being on your show allowed us to reach out to the entire state in a way that we could not on our own. Keep up the great work and we hope to see you real soon!

Thanks again,

Pat

With over five hundred episodes aired over a twenty year span, *Making It Grow!* is a South Carolina institution. The good will we have garnered through our educational thrust delivered in a lively,

entertaining fashion, is now being directly to promote individual South Carolina growers/producers involved in the new movement towards locally and sustainably produced agricultural products, both fresh and value added. We have entered a new era in our impact as we partner with the SC Department of Agriculture to preserve and enhance the agricultural economic underpinnings of South Carolina.