



Surviving Disasters Through Risk Management Preparation and Best Practices in Eastern North Carolina

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INTRODUCTION

Small-scale producers continue to face the challenges of managing risk as they face historically high input and energy costs, fewer off-farm employment opportunities, and increased financial and marketing risks. They need the ability to deal with risks that come with natural and man-made disasters. To assist producers with these challenges, a series of Risk Management Workshops were conducted for farmers in Eastern North Carolina. The project was funded by Southern Sustainable Agriculture Research and Extension. The goal of each workshop was to assist small farmers in Eastern North Carolina respond to risk by developing their own personal disaster risk management plans.

OBJECTIVES

The primary objective was for participants to develop the skills and to understand their own operation sufficiently to establish a written goal for each of the five areas of risk specific to the farm, (production, financial, marketing, legal, human), delineate for each goal at least three specific actions to reach those goals, and commit to follow through and implement their personal disaster risk management plan. Specific objectives included: teaching individuals how to conduct a disaster risk assessment of their personal situation and how to prepare for likely disasters.

DELIVERY METHODS

The delivery of this education program consisted of three major components: 1) workshops 2) one-on-one trainings and 3) individual study. Applied education consisting of two sequential workshops in Durham and Lumberton supplemented by homework assignments and individualized counseling along with one-on-one training was delivered to 32 producers by local extension agents.

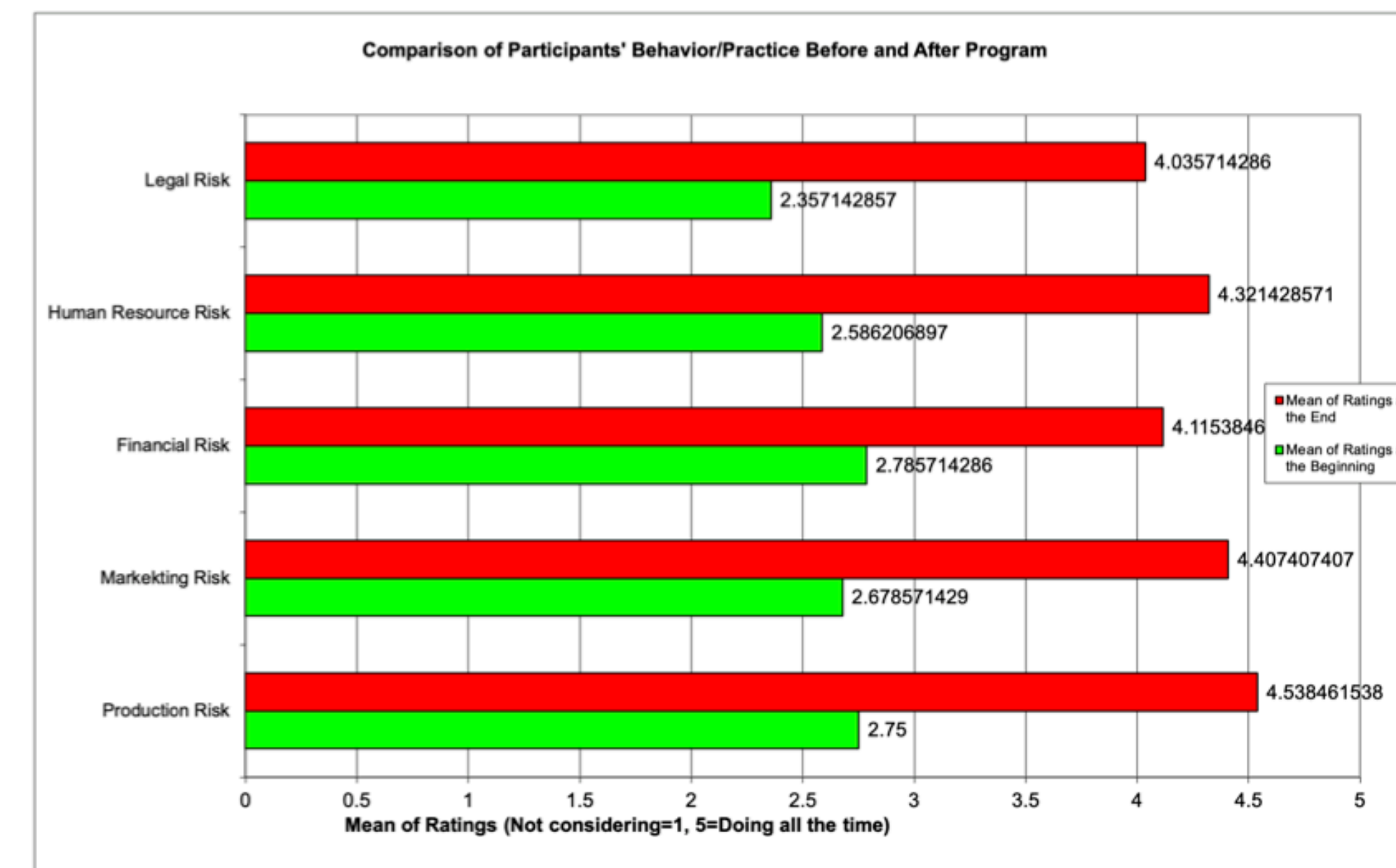
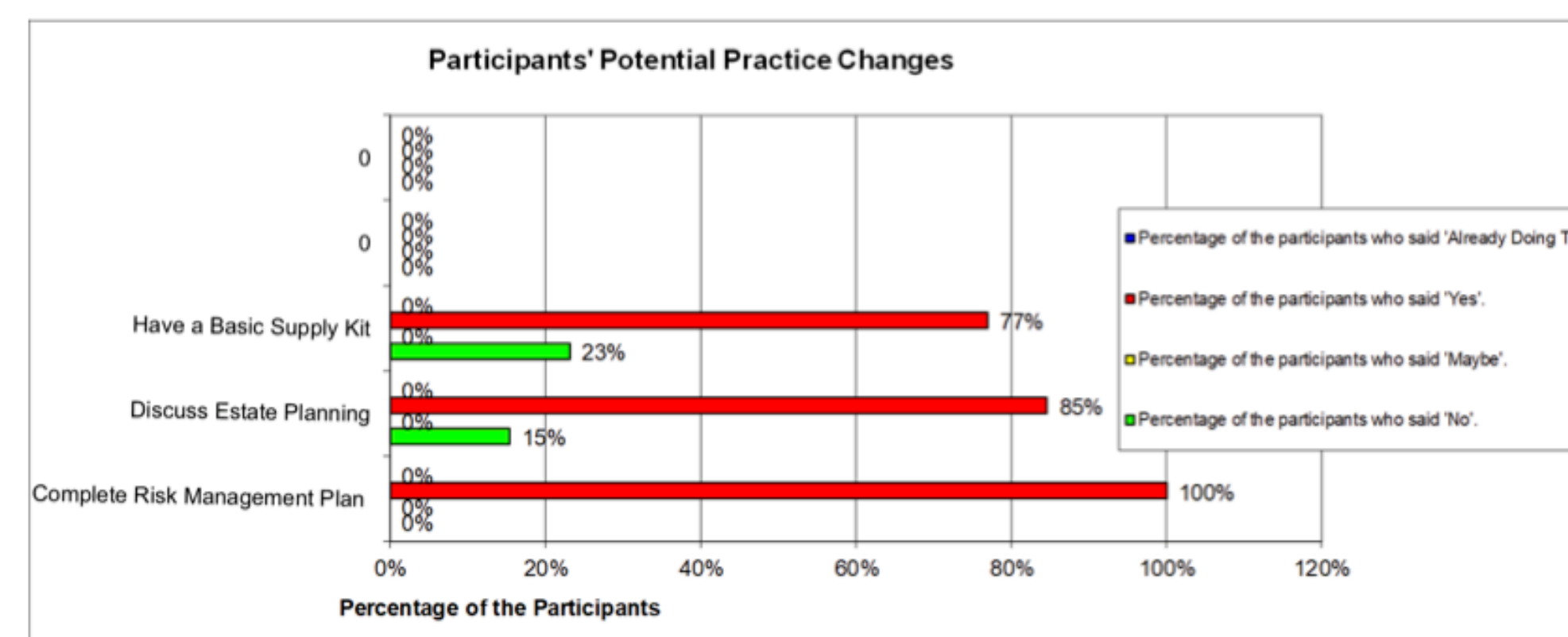


Figure 2. Farmers attending the Surviving Disasters Through Risk Management Preparation Training Workshop in Durham, North Carolina on October 17, 2025



RESULTS

Project outcomes show that 32 producers acquired the risk management and market analysis skills and understanding of their own operations to set a goal for each of the five areas of risk. Evaluations conducted at the beginning and end of the series of workshops showed that participants behavior and understanding of risk had increased from an average of 2.1 to 4.5 on a scale of 1 to 5. At the conclusion of the workshops, several farmers commented orally and on the written evaluation form that they had learned lots of informative information to help with their farm operations, this was the best and most comprehensive course they have ever attended and wish that more farmers would be able to attend these workshops in the future.

FOLLOW-UP EVALUATIONS

Follow up interviews and surveys taken four months after the last workshop showed that the participants were continuing to develop their disaster risk management plans. Some of the actions that have been completed include: discussing estate planning with family members; have a basic disaster supply kit for emergency situations; and apply for USDA-NRCS Equip Cost Share Program. These actions have made their farms more profitable and sustainable. Some of the participants had listed actions that will be completed beyond the program's reporting timeframe.

CONCLUSIONS

With these disaster risk management tools, local farmers can build the confidence they need to deal with future natural and man-made disasters. Future plans are to continue conducting series of risk management workshops with special emphasis placed on one of the five areas of risk. Small Producers will continue to benefit from Cooperative Extension Programs.

