



Situation:

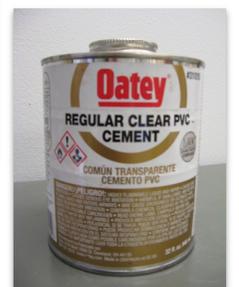
Irrigating landscapes in economically distressed counties is significantly less attainable than in economically stable areas. Taylor County residents were less inclined to install a barrel because of financial inhibitors to purchase, and less concerns of water savings because private wells are the source of water for both irrigation and drinking outside city limits of Perry. The motivation for saving water is not a priority when water is plentiful and at no measurable cost.

Objective:

To improve their practices and impacts, the extension agent will try alternative strategies to solve problems such as making rain barrels available at lower cost so lower income counties will be able to enjoy the benefits of rainwater properties, reduce stormwater runoff, and enhance their efforts of good environmental stewardship.

Methods:

Educational programming in Taylor and Hillsborough Counties have differing results. Both county's presentations include information on how to decrease potable water use in landscapes using rain barrels/cisterns. Both include demonstrations/information on how to create a rain barrel from a food grade tote, installing a spigot, reconfiguring the top of the barrel, creating overflow accommodations, use for harvested water from roof structures versus non-roof surfaces, connecting multiple barrels, painting the barrel and maintenance needed.



Results:

Many Hillsborough County residents attending a rainwater harvesting workshop installed the barrel provided for a \$5.00 fee. Historically, the majority of survey respondents in Hillsborough (88%) harvested between 1-250 gallons per month. The remaining 12% indicated a savings average of 103-201 gallons per month. Taylor County water savings were similar to Hillsborough.

In Taylor County seventy-five percent indicated after attending rainwater harvesting workshop that they had a better understanding of the purpose and practicality of a rain barrel and would purchase and install one if they could afford to do so. Fifty-two percent (n=44) of participants purchased a rain barrel after workshops for \$45. In Hillsborough County the knowledge increase post workshop was eighty-five percent, and all households received a barrel.

Conclusion:

Compared to state average, Taylor County is below average incomes and above average poverty levels. Such factors make it difficult for residents to invest in educational programs. Agents are researchers, thus the need to assess situations to improve their practices, action research allows the extension agent to try alternative strategies to solve problems such as making rain barrels available at lower cost so lower income counties will be able to enjoy the benefits of rainwater properties, reduce stormwater runoff, and apply positive environmental stewardship just as Hillsborough County residents have been actively participating for many years.



References

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2. Watson, Gerard. Rain Barrels A Homeowners Guide . https://sfyl.ifas.ufl.edu/sarasota-docs/hortres/rain_barrels_guide.pdf