

INTRODUCTION

Small and Historically Underserved 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 attractive farming opportunities. To assist producers with these challenges, a series of Risk Management Workshops were conducted in partnership with National Crop Insurance Services and Digital Extension Risk Management Education. This educational program was developed to help these farmers respond to the five special emphasis areas of risk.

OBJECTIVES

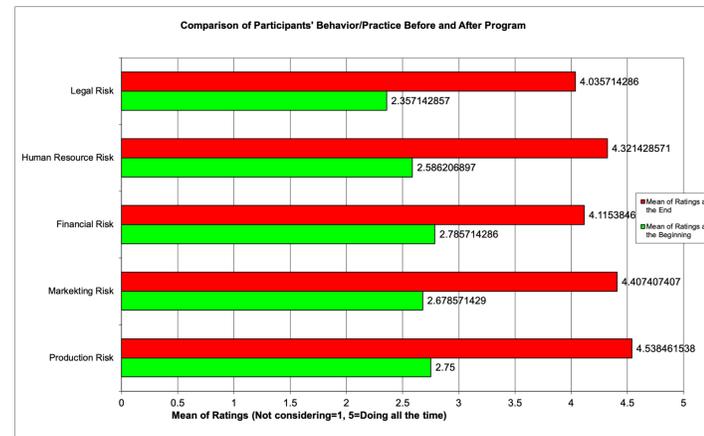
The 2018 Farm Bill and USDA policy identifies four groups as “historically underserved”: Beginning; Socially Disadvantaged; Veterans; or Limited-Resource. The primary objective was for participants to acquire the skills and understanding their own operation sufficiently to establish a written goal for each of the five areas of risk and for each decision variable of marketing risk specific to the farm, delineate for each goal at least specific actions to reach goals, and commit to follow through and implement their personal risk management marketing plans and strategies.

DELIVERY METHODS

The delivery of this education program consisted of two major components: 1) workshops and 2) individual study. Due to the COVID pandemic, applied education which was originally scheduled to be all in-person, eventually consisted of eight sequential workshops (7 virtual, 1 in-person; 30 hours total) supplemented by homework assignments and individualized counseling was delivered to 51 producers via a partnership of subject matter experts and local extension agents. The in-person workshops were located at the NCCES - Robeson County and Duplin County Centers.

RESULTS

Project outcomes show that 51 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 and five key marketing mix variables. Evaluations conducted at the beginning and end of the series of workshops showed that participants had increase their knowledge of risk. At the conclusion of the workshops, several farmers commented orally and on the written evaluation form that they were grateful for the opportunity to participate, 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 six months after the last workshop showed that 36 of the 51 participants had accomplished at least half of their specific actions and 13 had completed all of their actions which included: installing high tunnel greenhouses and deep well irrigation systems, receiving financial assistance, having roadside marketing signs printed, and developing personal webpage and social media pages. These actions have made their farms more profitable and sustainable. Some of the participants had listed actions that will be taken outside the time frame of the reporting cycle.



Figure 2. Farmers receiving their certificates after completing the Risk Management Training on May 24, 2022 at the Duplin County Extension Center in Kenansville, North Carolina.

CONCLUSIONS

With these risk management and marketing tools, local farmers can build the confidence they need to deal with future risks and opportunities. Future plans are to conduct another series of risk management workshops with special emphasis placed on one of the five areas of risk. Small and Historically Underserved Producers will continue to benefit from Cooperative Extension Programs.

