

USING A TEAM APPROACH TO VIRTUAL COMMODITY MEETINGS IN SOUTH CAROLINA'S FRUIT & VEGETABLE INDUSTRY

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NEED/GOAL

To utilize a statewide team approach when providing commodity meetings in a virtual setting in order to reach a broader audience, provide excellent cutting edge content, and increase grower interaction via the web during COVID-19 modified operations.

EDUCATIONAL PRACTICES

Local annual commodity meetings from previous years were assessed and evaluated by the commercial fruit and vegetable Extension Agents. From that, a list of major statewide commodities was established as a basis for virtual program planning.



- Strawberries
- Sustainable/Organic Production
- Small Fruits
- Brassicas
- Tomatoes/Peppers
- Tree Fruits/Nuts
- Cucurbits

- A lead agent and team members were jointly decided on for each program based on preference, expertise and grower connections.
- Teams were then responsible for finding speakers, organizing the agenda, applying for continuing educational credits, sponsors, marketing, hosting the virtual program, and an evaluation.
- Statewide marketing templates were developed by using Extension branding guidelines to unify the programs as a team, and as a part of Clemson University. All signups for programs were posted on and linked to the team's weekly blog page at SCGrower.com.
- Teams used a division of duties during the virtual workshops to ensure smooth transitions, engagement with the audience, and ensure that all questions were answered. Duties included:
 - Zoom Driver/Host
 - Chat Moderators
 - Speakers
 - Troubleshooter/IT Person



- Upon completion of the program, a follow-up email was sent to all participants with the recording of the presentation, any reference materials requested, the evaluation, contact information, and a link back to the team's weekly blog.

COHESIVE MARKETING

TEAM BLOG BANNER



MEETING MATERIALS



BLOG/EMAIL BANNERS

EMAIL/PRINT FLIERS



SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS



COOPERATIVE EXTENSION
 College of Agriculture, Forestry and Life Sciences

PROGRAM RESULTS

1. Significant increase in the number of commodity meetings provided by agents, and the participation of growers.



2. Significant increase in traffic to the team blog website at SCGrower.com during meeting months.



3. Additional networking, programming and content has now been developed to serve the commercial fruit & vegetable growers of South Carolina:

- SC Grower Exchange - LIVE weekly chats of what is happening in the fields. Open to growers, hosted by agents.
- SC Grower Exchange Podcast - Recordings of the weekly chats available 'on-demand' for growers.
- 'CU'living SC Growers - Monthly virtual workshops on seasonal topics with agents and specialists.
- THIRTY SIX Extension/Research Specialists from across the USA assisted by providing content for programming without costly travel considerations.

VIRTUAL PROGRAMMING WILL NOW BE INCORPORATED INTO ALL IN-PERSON MEETINGS