



Risk Management Education for Hispanic and Other Small Producers in South Texas

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Project Introduction

Expended Amount: \$42,203

This project provided Hispanic and other small producers with financial risk management strategies that would help their enterprises succeed. Training included economics of input decisions, cost of production, benchmarking, financial literacy and record keeping. Additional topics presented were small-scale production techniques, which included drought mitigation tactics. The target audience and geographical location included Hispanic and other small-scale producers located in South Texas. Workshops were provided in Spanish when needed and also utilized personal instruction pertinent to this audience. The risk management training sessions resulted in producers understanding, evaluating and deciding input decisions, financial and cost-benefit analysis, and implementing financial literacy and record keeping techniques.

Project Participants

The project's participants were mostly comprised of Hispanic producers with small-scale production operations. These producers often lack basic knowledge of financial record keeping and how it can positively affect the health of their enterprise. The participants were farmers and ranchers, some growing conventional and others utilizing organic production techniques. The majority of these producers sell at local farmers markets and other local establishments.

The participants in the group come from farming and ranching backgrounds and are continuing in these enterprises. Demand for the training had been demonstrated by the partnering organizations Texas-Mexico Border Coalition and Beginning Farmers and Ranchers Development Program. Their constant interaction with the targeted group revealed that the targeted audience could benefit from this type of training and had requested it.

Project Area

The project area for this project was South Texas, an area from San Antonio south to the Rio Grande Valley of Texas on the Texas-Mexico border. This area has a high concentration of Hispanic producers, the target audience for this training. The project was able to reach audiences in this area. A potential extension into another area will be counties just north of the service area, as some of the workshops had participants from outlying areas.

Project Outcomes

The project outcomes were positive. Training participants indicated that they were better able to understand the importance of financial record keeping. Additionally, they were better able to understand the basics of financial record keeping and the impact that it can have on their bottom line. Overall, there were 204 participants in the workshops. All indicated that the small-scale production techniques were valuable and would be implemented. Of all the participants that attended

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financial literacy and record keeping sessions, 89% of participants indicated that the information was valuable and that they would implement some of these practices. Workbooks were available, and most took a workbook with them to begin their tracking of expenses, income and associated financial transactions. The video on drip irrigation, which provides drought mitigation techniques, has been aired on local rural public television, with thousands of viewers.

Quotes

Several of the participants included quotes on their evaluations:

“Great tips.”

“I am the record keeper in our family and came to learn what needs to be tracked. Very helpful.”

“Very useful information. Thanks a lot!”

“Buenísimo clase, felicidades”

The following are quotes provided during one-to-one discussion after the sessions:

“What was presented was true – record keeping is important. Things start adding up and you aren’t aware of it until it’s too late and you’ve spent more than you thought.”

“Great information that’s really needed. Financial record keeping is something important that we don’t do as much as needed.”

“I like the way the material was presented. The record keeping part of the business isn’t always fun, but it’s necessary.”

Project Success Story

Arnold de los Santos, a small agricultural producer near San Benito, Texas, demonstrated the need for record keeping previous to the workshop. During the session, the speaker explained the importance of financial literacy, and he informed me that it was something that he knew that he needed to begin undertaking but was not sure how. I explained that it can be as complicated as need be, and for an operation of similar size to his, a good start could be a record-keeping book provided at the session. Arnold has begun keeping track of expenses and other items and has found that tracking of the items has made him better aware of income and expenses.

***Sandra Martini, H. L. Goodwin** and **Ronald L. Rainey**, Grant Coordinator and Co-Directors, respectively, of the Southern Risk Management Education Center, serve as editors of this report series. To learn more about risk management education programs and resources, visit the Southern Center website (<http://srmec.uark.edu>) or the Extension Risk Management Education Program link (www.extensionrme.org).

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