

“Providing Better Assistance for Farmers and Ranchers to Develop  
Sustainable Enterprises”  
Results from a Survey of Assistance Providers

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## **WHO ARE WE?**

In an effort to become more sustainable, an increasing number of family farmers are operating their farms as innovative small businesses. They are focusing on net profit margins instead of gross production records. They are producing products based on consumer demand, and exploring direct markets and market niches. They are diversifying into a wide array of products and services, and adding value in numerous ways.

These farmers have begun looking to agricultural assistance providers for technical assistance that goes way beyond production needs. They are asking for assistance in areas such as business planning, product development, financing and capitalization, marketing, distribution, product labeling, entrepreneurship, and the development of cooperatives or other business partnerships.

Many agencies and organizations in the Southern region of the United States (AL, AR, FL, GA, KY, LA, MS, NC, OK, SC, TN, TX, VA) are developing programs to meet some of these farmers' needs. Programs have been initiated by state governments and departments of agriculture, by land-grant universities, by sustainable agriculture organizations and farmers associations, by economic development agencies and electric cooperatives, by faith based groups and consumer organizations. Some run workshops or training programs for groups, while others work one-on-one with farmer clients. Many focus on specific aspects of sustainable enterprise development such as cooperative development, value-added products, or business training. Others offer varying services that meet several needs. Some have grafted enterprise development assistance onto programs that primarily focus on production assistance, while others offer production assistance in the context of an enterprise-focused program.

Most of these agencies and organizations serve single states or a region or county within a state. Some service areas are defined by natural physical boundaries (such as mountain ranges or watersheds), while the local market or a common product defines others. Almost all operate on fairly small budgets, although a few are well financed. The amount of staff providing assistance in this area ranged from one to four people at smaller organizations, to 8-10 people at a few larger agencies. Most of the organizations also augmented their staff with hired consultants.

In addition to these on-the-ground agencies, there are a growing number of regional associations and national groups that provide information, funding, and/or networking support. Southern SAWG is one of these, providing information and education to farmers and assistance providers on value-added production, innovative marketing techniques, and sustainable on-farm enterprise development for the past 12 years. We facilitated this planning process with support from a grant from the Southern Region SARE Program.

## THE INTERVIEW PROCESS

For this planning project, we chose approximately 30 of these service organizations to interview -- organizations that seem to be long-time leaders in sustainable enterprise service and/or innovative in their work. We tried to find a diverse balance of interviewees based on geography (across all 13 Southern states), type of agency (state government, university, or NGO), and type of service they focus on. Research associate Sarah Leavitt conducted phone interviews with key people from 23 of these organizations (listed in appendix A) during the winter of 2004-05.

The interview process collected information in three areas about each organization. (See appendix B for interview questions.) The first set of questions focused on background information and general program approach -- mission of the organization, type of work in terms of sustainable enterprise development, number of staff, major partners, and sources of funding. The second set of questions focused on the effectiveness of their assistance -- how their programs are evaluated, what programs they found to be most effective, their biggest challenges, and what other programs they would like to see. The final set of questions focused on the research and education components of the organization -- where they get ideas and information, if they are networking with other organizations, and what research and education they feel would increase their effectiveness.

In April 2005, a team of nine people (listed in Appendix A) reviewed the survey results and made modifications to more accurately reflect the state of sustainable enterprise development work in our region. They also suggested some strategic research and education that would increase the effectiveness of this work in the South. Their input is reflected in this report.

For the purposes of this planning project, our report will primarily focus on the answers to four key questions:

1. Which of your program(s) are most effective in helping farmers? Explain why?
2. Are there other programs or activities that you would like to see implemented in your region? If so, what are they?
3. What barrier(s) are keeping your organization from being more effective in this work?
4. What research or information is needed to increase the effectiveness of this type of work?

We've also included a short summary of background information we gathered (in appendix C) from the other interview questions.

## **WHAT'S WORKING?**

### **The Most Effective Existing Programs**

A wide variety of programs were mentioned as most effective in helping farmers develop sustainable enterprises. People offered two types of answers -- programs they felt were effective because of the type of assistance (i.e. marketing, loans, product development, etc), and programs they felt were effective because of the way assistance was delivered (i.e. one-on-one, field days, conferences, etc.).

#### Marketing assistance

Marketing assistance programs were mentioned most often. Three levels of marketing programs were mentioned:

1. Programs that promote farmers' products but do not market them.
2. Programs that develop markets or marketing avenues that farmers can then participate in, connecting farmers with markets.
3. Programs that actually market products for farmers.

Some programs at all three levels were mentioned as being effective.

In the first category, a "Local Food Campaign" market promotion program was mentioned. In the second category, programs were mentioned that linked market folks with farmers, that developed farmers markets, and that developed a Farm-to-School marketing program. The third category included programs that developed and/or operated marketing coops and marketing networks.

Some of the coop development assistance mentioned as most effective was:

1. One-on-one training for the board of directors, management of a coop, financial management and reporting (i.e.: how to read a balance sheet).
2. Helping new groups of farmers get over the humps - developing trust, pooling money, working together to form cooperatives.

One respondent said, "The marketing networks, which we piloted this past year, have been more effective than traditional project activities for a number of reasons. One, they focus on specialty products for high-end markets. Two, they involve intensive assistance to individual farmers along the agricultural enterprise continuum (planning, production, harvest, processing, marketing, delivery). This allows us to help farmers plan better for success and address problems along this continuum."

#### Loans and financial assistance

Loan and financial assistance programs were mentioned second most as being effective. Some of the programs mentioned:

1. Put together a creative financial package to provide capital for farmers to grow or change their business. Loans are \$20,000-25,000 with low rates over longer periods.
2. Tax and estate planning.

### 3. Small farm loan programs.

One respondent said, "We have a rigorous selection process to provide cost-share support to small farmers in transition. A board of experts decides who receives funding, and then these folks provide technical support to those who receive the cost-share support. \$10,000 grants are provided, as well as risk management workshops."

#### Value-added, product development, and other assistance

Here are some of the other types of programs mentioned as being effective:

1. Value-added program to assist farmers in all aspects of adding value to products.
2. Incubator kitchen for developing processed products.
3. Agritourism program.
4. A program that assists farmers with packaging, production, planning for future, and keeping up with organic certification.
5. Programs to keep farmers in power locally.

One respondent said, "We've designed tools that work well with limited-resource farmers. For example, whole farm planning tools are straightforward, simple, and geared toward the specific needs of the farmers we're working with. Anything that isn't relevant is discarded, and if something is missing that needs to be there, we create it."

#### Ways to deliver assistance

A large number of people said that on-on-one assistance with farmers is most effective. This assistance could be over the phone or in person. One respondent said, "Being accessible makes our program effective! We are available all the time to the growers by phone. They can call with *any* question."

Several people mentioned conferences and workshops as ways to reach larger audiences, and generate face-to-face contact. One respondent said, "We hold coaching workshops. For example, we coached farmers to change their message so it can fit into a 15-minute presentation for investors, board of directors, potential partners, etc."

Two people mentioned farm tours as effective ways to teach different methods of production, and let farmers see a diversity of product ideas.

Several people also mentioned that organizations need to have open dialogue and networking between each other to be more effective. Two mentioned that NGOs can be more effective by partnering with Cooperative Extension and other state agencies to reach more farmers.

Finally, one mentioned that a very flexible program is a key to effectiveness. Being able to refer farmers to whatever they need was important.

## **WHAT OTHER PROGRAMS OR ACTIVITIES ARE NEEDED?**

People mentioned a wide variety of other programs or activities that they would like to see implemented in our region. Several had specific ideas on expanding their own organizations' current programs. In addition, they provided a long "wish list" of the following:

### Business planning and entrepreneurship programs

1. One-on-one planning assistance for farmers.
2. Link folks who have entrepreneurial/business skills with farmers who are growing the product.
3. Strengthen formal entrepreneurial training through leadership programs for entrepreneurial advocates and leaders.
4. Start entrepreneurship "clubs" in ag departments at high schools and colleges.
5. Use sustainable food businesses as models for business training classes.
6. Offer special training in farm enterprise development at universities.
7. Develop farm modules at small business centers relating to areas specific to farmers.
8. Create more ag business development centers.
9. Employ ag business advisors in the Coop Extension program.

### Marketing support programs

1. A program to develop more marketing skills among farmers.
2. Develop more sophisticated market analysis in regional areas and make this accessible to farmers.
3. Marketing training for Extension agents as a follow-up to business training.
4. More emphasis and someone to deal with marketing - partnering with farm coops.
5. Start working more with mid- to larger-sized farms to help them sell locally.

### Credit / cost share / loan programs

1. Cost-share program for farmers producing traditional crops (like tobacco) moving to alternative agriculture.
2. Program to provide resources to farmers who have planned well -- venture capital pool or loans.
3. Targeted credit program -- give favorable loan conditions targeted toward new agricultural ideas
4. Tax credit programs for innovative sustainable farms.

### Other programs

1. Farm-Link -- access to land for new farmers.
2. Funding for coops to hire full-time managers with background for that job.
3. Computer training for farmers and funding for computer equipment.
4. Stress management programs.

5. New enterprise program for tobacco farmers losing their allotments.
6. Need more value-added resources to implement the value-added programs.

### Sustainable agriculture training or focus

Several people mentioned a need for a greater focus on sustainable agriculture in current programs, or new sustainable agriculture programs. A few mentioned:

1. More emphasis within the established programs on sustainable agriculture; done some work, but not enough; need more money and more human resources.
2. More emphasis from USDA on organic and small, sustainable farms.
3. Any programs that focus on sustainable agriculture.

### More linkages and working together among agencies:

1. Bring people together from different agencies to work together more effectively.
2. More support from the extension services and land grant universities.
3. Stronger connections with the 1862 land grant universities.

### Policy changes

A few people mentioned specific state programs or regulations that need to be changed to support sustainable enterprises. For instance, state laws in Kentucky were recently changed to allow value-added products processed in home farm kitchens to be sold at farmers markets, and the Arkansas state legislature recently passed a bill to consolidate several state agencies into a department of agriculture.

### Nothing new

A few people said that we don't need new programs or activities, just more funding and resources for the current work we do.

## **WHAT ARE OUR BARRIERS?**

We asked what barriers were keeping their organizations from being more effective in delivering sustainable enterprise development assistance to farmers. Lack of resources was mentioned most often as a barrier, but attitudinal or sociological barriers were mentioned almost as much.

### Lack of resources

The most frequently mentioned barrier was lack of resources. Ten people mentioned lack of funding, and many others mentioned lack of staff or human resources. One person mentioned the lack of other active organizations to network with.

There didn't seem to be any single factor that connected the organizations that stated they lacked funding. Some are well-established organizations, while others are newer. NGOs as well as various government-funded organizations said they lacked adequate funding.

Some of the specific comments about lack of resources include:

1. Coming up with non-federal matching funds to receive a federal grant is often difficult or impossible for smaller organizations.
2. Inflexibility in project funding often means that there is excess money in one area, while another needed activity goes under-funded.
3. It's harder to get grant funds for whole systems work and infrastructure; many funders are still stuck in the old commodity funding paradigm.
4. Funding is often connected to political agendas, making it non-strategic for our purposes.

#### Attitudinal/sociological barriers

A large number of people mentioned sociological or attitudinal challenges as their biggest barriers. Some of the comments include:

1. Many farm operators think there is no way someone could help them -- they are independent to a fault.
2. Farmers attitudes -- many don't *want* to become entrepreneurs or marketers; they just want to stay in the country and do the same thing they always have.
3. Trying to get farmers to understand that this organization is trying to help them.
4. Difficulty reaching people of different races or cultures.
5. It takes a while to be accepted if you are an outsider -- if you come from outside the state or the local land-grant university.
6. Being a woman in the agricultural field.
7. People think anyone focused on sustainable agriculture must be an organic horticulturist -- couldn't be further from the truth.
8. Being at an 1890 land grant institution lowers their credibility -- not viewed with the credibility of an 1862 land grant; have to work twice as hard.
9. Some folks at institutions don't believe in entrepreneurship and don't want to invest in entrepreneurial programs.
10. Attitude of people in certain areas -- folks in power want to stay that way, so they resist change.

#### Farmer-based challenges

1. Diminishing farmer population and increasing age of farmers.
2. Farmers lack of stronger communication and planning skills.
3. Farmers lack of understanding in marketing value-added products.
4. A whole generation of farmers have skills that are geared toward only one kind of production and market (i.e. tobacco), so it is difficult to teach completely new skill sets to everybody at once.

5. The industrial model of farming provided prescriptions for problems, while the new entrepreneurship model involves more creative decision-making that is difficult for some people.
6. Farmers reluctance to risk borrowing money or start a new venture.
7. Need more growers for the cooperative in order for the cooperative to become more efficient, yet growers are reluctant to join until success is proven.
8. Working with cyclical nature of farming -- difficulty in getting farmers to training events during their busy season.
9. Conventional agriculture -- long-standing recipe for farming that is slow to change.

#### Bureaucratic and structural barriers

Several people mentioned bureaucratic or structural barriers such as the following:

1. Our institution encourages group activities, but this is not always as effective as one-on-one assistance.
2. Overhead costs and bureaucratic requirements take away a large portion of budget, so they can't implement programs at the level they planned.
3. Field staff are managed by someone in an office who doesn't understand the needs of the low-resource, smaller farmers.
4. Working with farmers at a university without a college of agriculture.
5. Not a lot of support from the state government for this type of work.
6. Expected to serve such a diverse group of farmers -- different products, different scale, different land resources, etc. -- that it is hard to create specific programs.
7. Political issues sometimes are at odds with serving the needs of clients.

#### Lack of information or research

1. In some areas, sustainable techniques yet to be supported by much research; not much economic work on small farms.
2. Need a deeper understanding of the local farm economy.
3. Need help translating research information down to the farm level.
4. Lack of information on enterprise budgets for sustainable and value-added enterprises.
5. Hard to find good price information, especially for organic crops.
6. Lack of resources guides and directories for farmers and consumers.
7. Need information on how to focus and provide technical assistance.
8. Agencies with business expertise often lack expertise in agriculture.

#### Challenges of marketplace

1. Difficulty in accessing high value markets such as health food stores, gourmet food stores, etc.
2. Slotting fees are too expensive for individual farmers to get on supermarket shelves.
3. Irregular buying patterns of buyers, and matching production practices to buyer needs.
4. Price competition -- buyers have better market information than growers, enabling them to set the prices.
5. Distance between farms and markets for farmers in rural areas trying to market direct.

### Lack of infrastructure

Three people mentioned lack of infrastructure as a major barrier. This includes the physical infrastructure such as feed stores, processing facilities, storage facilities and input suppliers, as well as the information systems such as Cooperative Extension agents.

## **WHAT DO WE NEED TO SUCCEED?**

### **Research and Information Needs**

From our phone interviews we received over 50 suggestions of research or information that could increase the effectiveness of sustainable enterprise development assistance. Topics ran the gamut from systems-type research and information to more specific research and information on-farm or within aspects of the marketplace. There were also several suggestions for how research should be conducted. Responses are grouped below, roughly by topic, and generally go from more macro levels of research and information to micro levels.

### Local food system / food chain

1. Research on the agriculture economy that is missed by data collection, such as small crops and alternative livestock.
2. Evaluation of what food is coming in and going out of a community.
3. What is needed to develop regional food systems; what's the cost? How do we spend our agricultural money now, subsidies, etc.?
4. What does an economically viable food system look like? Point to examples where local communities are providing a good percentage of their own food.
5. Need more work on vertical coordination -- look at food chain: production to harvesting to handling to storage to value-added to market; hard for technical support people to know about all these aspects.
6. What value is lost in an area as farms are lost?
7. Value of agriculture to tourism.

### Partnerships and business models

1. General business models for farmers.
2. Business models that use urban-rural linkages, with farmers retaining some control.
3. Connecting farmers to markets and making products viable for their local community.
4. Market integration partnerships -- small producers getting together to increase profit.
5. Better models on coops -- organizing and managing.
6. How do you motivate farmers to work with a coop? Motivate farmers to develop leadership qualities?

### Fostering rural entrepreneurship

1. What industrial countries have rural entrepreneurship? How can models from other countries be applied to us?
2. Why rural entrepreneurial hot spots? What's working, what's not? There are lots of case studies, but they give a small picture.
3. Rural entrepreneur busters- how do rural busters emerge?
4. What's best to foster rural entrepreneurship?
5. The social aspects of entrepreneurship- who will be successful? What support mechanisms lead to success?

### Infrastructure

1. "How to" research on development of infrastructure, getting from farm to market more efficiently (cooling, transporting, etc.).
2. Small, appropriate scale infrastructure for dairy and meat, including feasibility of locally-based processing facilities.

### Marketplace

1. Area specific marketing research -- at county level, not state or regional.
2. Marketing research -- know the varieties and production info already; need marketing specialties data.
3. Marketing research on what value-added products are the most purchased and at the best price.
4. Better organic price information for farmers and cooperatives.

### Enterprise budgets / profitability

1. Research on most lucrative types of value-added products -- how to predict changing trends and niches in markets.
2. For growers -- tracking program to offer information about how much money growers need to make for each crop to profit from that crop; questions and answers established for each crop.
3. Farmer-friendly profitability worksheet that would allow farmers to determine if they are losing money or making money.
4. Marketing research to help businesses determine if something is a profitable business.
5. Enterprise budgets for alternative enterprises and alternative marketing schemes.

### Production research

A few people mentioned specific production research in areas that are lacking, such as goats, pastured livestock, organic vegetables, and bred mares.

### Evaluation of programs

One person mentioned a need to have better evaluation procedures -- to gather information from farmers who received assistance from their program and find out if their farms were more sustainable.

### Sociological

1. How to change attitudes and behavior of the specific people we are working with.
2. Farmer decision-making research - how do farmers make decisions, and how can we help them make better decisions.
3. Stress management.

### Types of research and information tools

1. More tools and information need to be developed that are geared toward small-scale, limited-resource farmers with lower education levels. Focus on simple, straightforward tools - visual and interactive components are a plus.
2. Type of research needed is participatory research, more qualitative, working with groups; this type of research is longer term and costs more money.
3. Need to develop on-farm research trials that are enterprise development in nature.
4. Need organic site-specific research.
5. We don't need a lot more research, but need to implement the research that has already been done.
6. There is not a lack of research; translating info down to the farm level is needed.
7. No more marketing research -- we need market testing.

## **SYNTHESIZED LIST OF NEEDED ACTIVITIES**

Drawing on the survey results and extensive input from our April meeting, we developed a synthesized list of some of most important research, education or other project activities that would increase the effectiveness of sustainable enterprise development assistance in our region.

### Research and education on sustainable/regional food systems

1. Identify the key components and principles of a sustainable food system. How do they connect and relate to make up the system?
2. Create an educational dialogue on sustainable food systems and their viability, their impact on the community, and opportunities for the farmer. What components are in place? What components need to be developed and how?
3. Facilitate the development of strategies (or "blueprints") for building more sustainable food systems in each state. This would include some type of assessment of current components and infrastructure.

4. Specifically describe the opportunities for farmers in the system, and help assistance providers understand how to provide assistance in a way that takes advantage of the benefits of these emerging systems.
5. Identify needed next steps for research and for successfully implementing these systems in our region.

#### Enhance networking, collaboration, cooperation, and partnerships

1. Map where sustainable enterprise development resources are allocated.
2. Facilitate the coordination of resources through enhanced networking, collaborations, and partnerships.
3. Help farmers have input on development of resources and become more equal partners in assistance programs.

#### Create a marketing information service for direct marketers

1. Develop a system of on-going research on markets and price information at local levels. Especially look at market analysis on consumer demand for sustainably produced products.
2. Assess, consolidate and deliver this information to farmers. Develop a system for this information to be easily accessed by farmers.
3. Conduct research on gaps in information.

#### Enhance enterprise information and entrepreneurship

1. Compile and circulate successful enterprise models that could be used by farmer entrepreneurs. Focus on components or principles of the enterprises that can be applied to other enterprises or other locations.
2. Provide training for assistance providers on how to analyze new enterprises, how to find and use enterprise models and budgets, and how to create enterprise budgets.
3. Facilitate entrepreneurship training for assistance providers, using expertise that is already in our region. Find a way to institutionalize this within organizations and agencies that assist farmers.

#### Research farmer coops and facilitate development of new collaborations

1. Conduct research on farmer cooperatives (or other marketing collaborations) to determine what assistance is successful, what assistance is not successful, and why.
2. Establish a staffed program for facilitating development of collaborative marketing and other sustainable enterprise activities among farmer groups.

## APPENDIX A

### **Organizational Contacts for People Interviewed**

**Alabama Cooperative Extension Farm Business Management and Financial Analysis Program.** [http://www.ag.auburn.edu/dept/aec/farm\\_analysis.html](http://www.ag.auburn.edu/dept/aec/farm_analysis.html)

P.O. Box 217, Headland, AL 36345; 334- 693-2010

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**Appalachian Sustainable Agriculture Project.** [www.asapconnections.org](http://www.asapconnections.org)

729 Haywood Road, Asheville, NC 28806; 828-236-1282

Charlie Jackson- ASAP Projects Coordinator, [Charlie@asapconnections.org](mailto:Charlie@asapconnections.org)

**Appalachian Sustainable Development.** <http://appsusdev.org>

PO Box 791, Abingdon, VA 24212; 276-623-1121

Anthony Flaccavento- Director, [asd@eva.org](mailto:asd@eva.org)

**Carolina Farm Stewardship Association,** [www.carolinafarmstewards.org](http://www.carolinafarmstewards.org),

PO Box 1263, Carrboro, NC 27510; 919-824-5238

Sandi Kronick-Eastern Carolina Organics Coordinator,

[sandi@easterncarolinaorganics.com](mailto:sandi@easterncarolinaorganics.com)

**Center for Profitable Agriculture,** <http://cpa.utk.edu>

The University of Tennessee, Middle Tennessee Experiment Station, P.O. Box 1819, Spring Hill, TN 37174; 931-486-2777

Rob Holland- Director, [rwholland@utk.edu](mailto:rwholland@utk.edu)

**Clinch Powell Community Kitchens,** Jubilee Project.

<http://jubileeproject.holston.org/business.htm>

PO Box 657, Sneedville, TN 37869; 423-733-4195

Steve Hodges- Director, [hodges@overhome.net](mailto:hodges@overhome.net)

**Coastal Plains Agri-Business Incubator System,** Wharton County Electric

Cooperative. [www.elcampochamber.com/agri\\_business\\_incubator.htm](http://www.elcampochamber.com/agri_business_incubator.htm)

P.O. Box 31, El Campo, Texas 77437; 979-543-6271

Carl Foshee, [carl.foshee@wcecnet.net](mailto:carl.foshee@wcecnet.net)

**Community Farm Alliance.** [www.communityfarmalliance.com](http://www.communityfarmalliance.com)

614-A Shelby St., Frankfort, KY 40601; 502-223-3655

Deborah Webb- Director, [dwebbcfa@bellsouth.net](mailto:dwebbcfa@bellsouth.net)

**Delta Land and Community / Delta Enterprise Network.** [www.deltanetwork.org](http://www.deltanetwork.org)

920 Hwy 153, Almyra, Arkansas 72003; 870-673-6346

Jim Worstell- Director, [jim@deltanetwork.org](mailto:jim@deltanetwork.org)

**Federation of Southern Cooperatives.** [www.federationsoutherncoop.com](http://www.federationsoutherncoop.com)  
2769 Church St, East Point, GA 30344; 404-765-0991  
Cornelius Blanding- Director of Emerging Markets, [fscmarketing@mindspring.com](mailto:fscmarketing@mindspring.com)

**Heifer International Alabama Field Office.** [www.heifer.org](http://www.heifer.org)  
2106-2nd Ave South, Irondale, AL 35210; 205-956-0088;  
Gus Heard-Hughes- Alabama Field Rep, [angus.heard-hughes@heifer.org](mailto:angus.heard-hughes@heifer.org)

**The Highland Center.** [www.thehighlandcenter.org](http://www.thehighlandcenter.org)  
P.O. Box 556 Monterey, VA 24465; 540-468-1922; [highcent@cfw.com](mailto:highcent@cfw.com)  
Betty Mitchell- Executive Director, [bettymitchell@htcnet.org](mailto:bettymitchell@htcnet.org)

**Kentucky Center for Cooperative Development.** [www.kccd.org](http://www.kccd.org)  
411 Ring Rd, Elizabethtown, KY 42701; 270-763-8258  
Larry Snell- Executive Director, [lsnell@kccd.info](mailto:lsnell@kccd.info)

**Kentucky Entrepreneurial Coaches Institute.** [www.uky.edu/Ag/KECI](http://www.uky.edu/Ag/KECI)  
University of Kentucky's College of Agriculture, 500 Garrigus Building, Lexington, KY  
40546-0215; 859-257-3186  
Ron Hustedde- Director, [rhusted@uky.edu](mailto:rhusted@uky.edu)

**Kentucky State University Small Farm Program.**  
Kentucky State University, Box 196, Frankfort, KY 40601; 502-597-6437  
Marion Simon- Director, [msimon@gwmail.kysu.edu](mailto:msimon@gwmail.kysu.edu)

**Kerr Center for Sustainable Agriculture.** [www.kerrcenter.com](http://www.kerrcenter.com)  
PO Box 588, Poteau, OK 74953; 918-647-9123  
Alan Ware- Director, Producer Grants Program/Stewardship Farm,  
[aeware@kerrcenter.com](mailto:aeware@kerrcenter.com)

**Louisiana Tech Center for Rural Development.** [www.latech.edu/tech/rural](http://www.latech.edu/tech/rural)  
PO Box 3188, Ruston, LA 71272; 318-257-2919.  
Elizabeth Higgins- Director, [ehiggins@latech.edu](mailto:ehiggins@latech.edu)

**Mountain Association for Community Economic Development.** [www.maced.org](http://www.maced.org)  
433 Chestnut St., Berea, KY 40403; 859-986-2373  
Justin Maxson- Director, [jmaxson@maced.org](mailto:jmaxson@maced.org)

**North Carolina REAL Enterprises.** [www.ncreal.org](http://www.ncreal.org), [info@ncreal.org](mailto:info@ncreal.org)  
123 W. Main St., Suite 210, Durham, NC 27701; 919-688-7325  
Eleanor Herndon- Director, [Eleanor@ncreal.org](mailto:Eleanor@ncreal.org)

**North Carolina State University-Creating Business Opportunities**, (no website yet).  
PO Box 8109, Raleigh, NC 27695; 919-515-6096  
Gary Bullen-Agricultural Economist and Project Coordinator, [gary\\_bullen@ncsu.edu](mailto:gary_bullen@ncsu.edu)

**Shoals Commercial Culinary Center.** <http://ccc.shoalsec.com>  
The Shoals Entrepreneurial Center, 610 W. College Street, Florence, Alabama 35631;  
256-764-0044.  
Sherry Campbell- Director, [scampbell@shoalsec.com](mailto:scampbell@shoalsec.com)

**Small Farm Development Center.** <http://www.alcorn.edu/outreach/sfdc/index.htm>  
Alcorn State University, 1000 ASU Drive, Box 1080, Alcorn State University, MS  
39096; 601-877-6449.  
Magid Dagher- Director, [mdagher@lorman.alcorn.edu](mailto:mdagher@lorman.alcorn.edu)

**Texas Center for Rural Entrepreneurship.** [www.tcre.org](http://www.tcre.org) or  
<http://ruralbusiness.tamu.edu/>  
Texas A&M University Research & Extension Center, PO Box 38, Overton, TX 75684;  
903-834-6191.  
Greg Clary- Director, [g-clary@tamu.edu](mailto:g-clary@tamu.edu)

**Tobacco Communities Reinvestment Fund.** [www.rafiusa.org](http://www.rafiusa.org)  
RAFI-USA, PO Box 640, Pittsboro, NC 27312; 919-542-1396.  
Jason Roehrig- Program Manager, Tobacco, [jason@rafiusa.org](mailto:jason@rafiusa.org)

**People who attended April 20-21, 2005 meeting to review results and suggest modifications to report for more accuracy:**

1. **Gary Bullen**, NCSU's Creating Business Opportunities Program (NC)
2. **Magid Dagher**, Small Farm Development Center at Alcorn State University (MS)
3. **Cindy Delvin**, Delvin Farms and Tennessee Organic Growers Association (TN)
4. **Andy Hankins**, Virginia State University
5. **Rob Holland**, UT Center for Profitable Agriculture (TN)
6. **Steve Hodges**, Jubilee Project (TN)
7. **Ed Martsolf**, Gateway Farms and private consultant (AR)
8. **Jason Roehrig**, RAFI-USA Tobacco Communities Reinvestment Program (NC)
9. **Deborah Webb**, Community Farm Alliance (KY)

## **APPENDIX B**

### **Phone Interview Questions**

#### **A. General program approach**

1. How do you define your mission?
2. What activities or programs assist farmers with aspects of sustainable enterprise development?
3. Who is your target audience/client base for each program?
4. How many staff members do you have working on these activities or programs?
5. What other organizations or agencies do you partner with or collaborate with in this work? How do your roles compliment each other?
6. Where does your funding support come from?

#### **B. Effectiveness of assistance**

1. Do you measure your effectiveness at the farm level? If so, how?
2. Which of your program(s) are most effective in helping farmers? Explain why?
3. What barrier(s) are keeping your organization from being more effective in this work?
4. Are there other programs or activities that you would like to see implemented in your region? If so, what are they?

#### **C. Research and Education**

1. Where do you get ideas and information for programs and activities?
2. Do you network with or exchange ideas with other agencies or organizations that are doing similar work? (frequently? a little? not at all?)
3. What research or information is needed to increase the effectiveness of this type of work?
4. What other organizations or agencies should we contact for this project?

## APPENDIX C

### Background Information on the Organizations Interviewed

We gathered quite a bit of background information on the 23 organizations we interviewed. This information may provide a richer context for understanding the responses of interviewees, and also the state of sustainable enterprise development assistance in our region.

#### Program areas

- 18 organizations provide technical assistance directly to farmers.
- 8 organizations have established a cooperative for farmers or are working to establish a cooperative.
- 8 organizations provide business training.
- 6 organizations have a value-added program.
- 6 organizations offer marketing training.
- 5 organizations hold workshops for farmers.
- 4 organizations do enterprise analysis for farmers.
- 4 organizations are involved in management of a farmer's market.
- 4 organizations offer grants to farmers.
- 3 organizations offer tobacco transition grants to farmers.
- 3 organizations have a business incubator program.
- 2 organizations offer whole-farm planning.
- 2 organizations have an agri-tourism program.
- 2 organizations hold conferences for farmers.
- 2 organizations have annual farm tours.
- 2 organizations offer leadership training.
- 1 organization has a farm-to-school program.
- 1 organization puts out a local food guide to the community.
- 1 organization offers management training.
- 1 organization has a demonstration farm.
- 1 organization offers production training.
- 1 organization offers loans to farmers.
- 1 organization offers training for bankers in farm enterprises.
- 1 organization acts solely as an information clearing house.

#### Other organizations they partner or collaborate with

Responses grouped by category:

- State Departments of Agriculture - 13 responses.
- State Land Grant Universities - 11.
- Business development or rural entrepreneurship centers - 8.
- Sustainable or organic farm organizations - 8.
- USDA Agencies, including NRCS, Rural Development, RMA, Farm Service Agency, Forest Service - 7.

- Cooperative Extension Service - 6.
- Non-land grant universities - 6.
- Farmers cooperatives - 5.
- Farm Bureau - 4.
- Chambers of Commerce - 3.
- Community associations - 3.
- State and regional centers for cooperative development - 2.
- Other regional development associations - 2.
- Farmers market associations - 2.
- Producer and commodity associations - 2.
- Urban food groups - 2.
- Leadership programs - 1.
- School systems - 1.
- State business resource alliance committee - 1.
- State Department of Economic Development - 1.
- Center for Rural Entrepreneurship - 1.

### **Current funding sources**

Although we didn't ask for specific funding information, we discovered funding came from a variety of sources including: federal grants, other federal or state governmental sources, private foundations and churches, individual donations, membership dues, endowments, and international governments. Five organizations reported earned income through social enterprise or fee-based services as a source of funding.

### **Ways of measuring effectiveness at the farm level**

Of the organizations interviewed, six do not measure the effectiveness of their programs at the farm level because they are not working specifically with farmers. Three other organizations stated that evaluation was the weakness of their programs. Here are the methods the other organizations use to measure the effectiveness of their sustainable enterprise development programs.

- 8 organizations track the income of the farmers they work with through financial reports or questionnaires.
- 7 organizations conduct formal evaluations or scientific surveys.
- 4 organizations track number of farms or businesses that use their services or become members.
- 3 organizations measure their effectiveness through hands-on work with growers.
- 3 organizations compile farmer progress reports or other reports.
- 1 organization tracks numbers of farmers continuing to farm
- 1 organization tracks the number of locally-owned businesses that are associated with agriculture.
- 1 organization talks with the members at their annual meeting.

## **Sources of information and ideas**

- Networking with other organizations - 13 responses.
- Attending conferences - 7.
- From farmers - 6.
- By looking everywhere - 5.
- From USDA - 4.
- By reading publications - 4.
- Generate internally among staff - 4.
- From ATTRA - 2.
- From Southern SAWG - 2.
- Searching the Internet - 2.
- From the Community Food Security Coalition - 1.
- From Agricultural Utilization Research Institute (AURI) and Agricultural Products Utilization Commission (APUC) - 1.
- From Association for Enterprise Opportunity (AEO) - 1.
- Looking to other countries - 1.
- From personal experience - 1.