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Table of Contents/Projects

Table of Contents

Pilot Study of 2 New Specialty Crops (Berry & Bean) in No. Nevada....2
 Food Production/Farmers Market.....11
 Specialty Crop Institute Tribal & Rural Outreach.....17
 Slanted Porch Hoop House and Farmer’s Market Improvements.....23
 GBFC Promoting Specialty Crop Producers.....27
 Fallon Small Farm Collaborative.....18
 Broadcast Media Plan Promoting Spec. Ind. In NV.....22
 Specialty Crop Program Coordinating Assistant.....23
 Nevada Specialty Crop Manager NV Marketing Office Projects.....37

Project Title: Pilot Study of 2 New Specialty Crops (Berry & Bean) in No. Nevada

Project Summary

The original impetus for the project was to study the feasibility of growing blueberries and fresh dried beans as two specialty crops for northern Nevada, using organic growing methods and high tunnel technology. These potential crops would then further the overall production of and access to affordable, healthy, and high-quality food in northern Nevada. Dry beans are a high protein food and blueberries are known for their high anti-oxidant and nutritional values, thus by testing the feasibility of production of these crops would allow for potential new markets for these foods in northern Nevada.

This pilot project examined the feasibility of growing blueberry varieties known for their anti-oxidant quality, heirloom dry bean varieties, and their high protein content in northern Nevada. The project had two phases: phase one started at the High Desert Montessori School in Reno and consisted of growing blueberries in raised containers inside a hoop house and beans outside in the garden; the second phase was conducted at the Urban Roots Farm in Reno with beans growing inside a hoop house and several berry varieties grown outside in grow bags.

One year of growing showed that growing blueberries inside a hoop house was not successful. This was due to a few factors; 1) alkalinity of the irrigation water 2) reduced chill hours inside the hoop house 3) extreme dry air and temperature fluctuations in the northern Nevada climate. Several heirloom bean varieties produced in the outside garden, however a longer growing season would allow for more fruit to dry.

In phase two several types of berries were grown successfully in grow bags outside. Bean growth was vigorous inside the hoop house and all but one bean variety produced significantly greater yields. This project demonstrated that the Yellow Eye, Mayacobe and Rio Zape heirloom dried beans varieties are worth pursuing as a specialty crop for farmers in northern Nevada, while blueberries should be avoided given our dry climate and high alkaline water conditions.

Project Approach

The first phase of the project was performed in 2010 and made possible through the collaboration of the several High Desert Montessori Middle School staff and students (monitoring, maintenance and measuring of plant crops), organic farmers Marcia and Steve Litsinger from Churchill-Butte Organics, Urban Roots Garden Classrooms staff (a local non-profit that provided garden education and monitoring of the plants during the summer

months), and Friends of Nevada Organics board members (a local non-profit that acted as fiscal agent and mentor for hoop house building and growing). One of the two hoop houses was built on school grounds and the garden was prepared for growing seven heirloom bean varieties outside (summer 2010) and seven blueberry varieties in containers inside the hoop house (fall 2010 to spring 2011).

The Montessori summer camp planted bean seeds, tied the plants to trellises, and maintained them until school started in fall 2010. From there, middle school students harvested and weighed the beans and recorded the results (see yield information for graph A). All of the bean varieties grew, 6 of the 7 heirloom bean varieties produced (Ayacote had no fruit), and Rio Zape produced the highest yield. They also planted and maintained the blueberries inside the hoop house all winter and spring. The blueberry plants did not fare well in the hoop house: all varieties struggled and eventually died by June 2011. After the spring of 2011, two lead teachers who adopted the project left the school, summer camp did not include gardening, and the school administration decided that it was at maximum capacity for garden activities and maintenance of the hoop house. As a dedicated partner, Urban Roots showed commitment to this project by performing many of the tasks needed to get results for the pilot project. Thus, with a second hoop house already purchased for the pilot project, they offered to repeat this pilot study at the Urban Roots farm site. The request to perform the second phase of the grant there was approved in by USDA in July, 2011. (A date modification has been made for sub-award 1002-01 in parent award 12-25-B-0936. The ending date will now be October 10, 2012.)

In October 2011, the second phase of the project was started by building the second hoop house at the Urban Roots farm in Reno with volunteers under the supervision of farmer Ray Johnson of Custom Gardens (see image set 2). The seven varieties of heirloom beans were planted in equal rows by volunteers inside the hoop house, in April 2012. Urban Roots summer camp children monitored the bean growth and trained them on trellises. The growing season inside the hoop house continued until late October when the bean plants were pulled the bean pods were harvested and dried. Providing this longer growing season for the heirloom dried beans proved to increase yield for every plant, except Tepary, which had a reduced yield, and Ayacote, which did not produce fruit in the hoop house either (see yield information in graph A).

Seven varieties of berries were planted in grow bags in May 2012: high bush blueberry, dwarf blueberry, black raspberry, red raspberry, gooseberry, serviceberry, and goumi. All but two blueberry shrubs thrived in the grow bags, but none produced fruit this first growing season.

Goals and Outcomes Achieved

The goal of this pilot was to further the production of and access to affordable, healthy, high quality food in northern Nevada. The study included the feasibility of growing blueberries in containers both inside and outside of a hoop house and to determine which of several heirloom bean varieties may be provide a local source of high protein dried beans both inside and outside of a hoop house environment. Both crops were tested as a potential to be grown by local Nevada farmers.

Blueberries:

As outlined in the project proposal, both southern heat-resistant blueberry species and northern high-bush, cold-tolerant blueberry species were planted in containers, monitored for growth, yield and robustness inside the hoop house and outside in the open.

From the study it was found that growing blueberries, no matter what variety, is not a feasible option, because plants did not thrive inside or outside in the northern Nevada dry climate, extreme temperature fluctuations, and with the alkaline irrigation water. The other berries thrived outside in grow bags, but one growing season did not prove long enough for production and yield of berries. It is suggested to do a future study with these berries over a 3 year period to determine which one is a good variety for farmers to grow for profit.

Heirloom Beans:

As outlined in the project proposal, 7 different varieties of dried heirloom beans were grown in the traditional outdoor garden setting and inside the hoop house for one growing season. Plants were monitored for growth, yield and robustness to determine which variety is a viable option for growing in the northern Nevada climate.

The study showed the following:

- 6 of the 7 varieties produced fruit: while Ayacote Morado plants grew vigorously, no fruit was yielded both outside and inside the hoop house
- Beans increased yields significantly inside the hoop house environment, largely due to extended season and warmer temperatures.
- Yellow Eye, Mayacobe and Rio Zape were the three highest yielding dried heirloom bean varieties. Outside, Rio Zape produced the highest yield, and inside the hoop house, Yellow Eye produced the highest yield.
- Tepary variety produced marginal outside and less inside the hoop house, which may be attributed the moister conditions inside the hoop house: Tepary is a native southwestern US and Mexican variety related

to the Anasazi bean, is more drought tolerant, but requires a longer growing season to produce higher yields.

- Beans are vigorous growers - it is advised to plan ahead and provide sturdy vertical growing systems for the bean plants to grow on.

From the study it was found that growing heirloom dried beans, in particular the Yellow Eye, Mayacobe and Rio Zape varieties, is a feasible specialty crop for northern Nevada farmers to pursue, notably in a hoop house environment to increase plant vigor and yields by extending the growing season.

Student Market Studies

While these specific activities, as described in the original project proposal, were not met precisely, the following activities were performed:

- During the first growing season at High Desert Montessori School, summer camp and middle school students ages 5 to 14 were involved with the planting, growing, harvesting, processing and weighing of the beans, and planting and monitoring of the beans. Summer camp staff, middle school teachers, and Urban Roots Garden Classroom all contributed to curriculum for these activities. In particular, middle schools learned about the nutritional values of the high-protein beans, how to produce them, and how to cook the beans. A meal was prepared in the school's kitchen and was shared with fellow students, teachers, school staff, and parents. The project was presented to the community at the school's annual school fair.
- The second growing season took place at Urban Roots Farm, where the beans were planted, grown and harvested by summer camp children ages 5 to 12, using curricular activities appropriate to each camp theme and child's ages. Over 90 community volunteers, international students from UNR, and home-schoolers also benefited from activities related to the hoop house- bean production. The harvest was cooked by a local chef and shared by community members. Friends of Nevada Organics staff applied to present the findings with local farmers and attendants at the 2013 Nevada Small Farm Conference; however, the schedule was full for this year. Future opportunities to share the project results will be pursued.

Beneficiaries

Direct beneficiaries of the project activities were middle school students and children attending garden camps at the Montessori School and Urban Roots, who learned how to prepare beds, sow seed, transplant shrubs, care for plants using organic methods, and harvest dry beans. Parents and volunteers, who

participated in the building of the hoop houses and the project overall, also benefited by learning about growing in the High Desert. Lastly, northern Nevada farmers will benefit from this study, giving them insight on the possibility of growing heirloom dried beans as a specialty crop for the local food market.

The following table quantifies to the estimated number of beneficiaries for the project:

High Desert Montessori School site

Summer Camp Students	340
Middle School Students	60
Teachers	12
Parents	160
Staff	14
TOTAL	586

Urban Roots Farm site

Summer Camp Students	300
UNR students	60
Urban Roots Volunteers	120
Chefs & Community Members	60
Staff	8
TOTAL	548

The blueberry part of the project was not successful, and the miscellaneous berry part was not fruitful in one growing season, thus no projections could be made for the economic impact of these crops for Nevada agriculture.

The potential economic impact of the fresh dry bean part of the project is expressed in the following table (10-foot rows):

	Total Yield	Estimated Price/Lbs	Total Income
First Growing Season Outside	870.5 grams = 1.9 lbs	\$5.50	\$10.45
Second Growing Season in Hoop House	2,771 grams = 6.1 lbs	\$5.50	\$33.55

These values can be extrapolated ten fold if grown in 100-foot rows, or 1300 fold if grown in 130 100-foot rows/acre.

Lessons Learned

Performing the study of growing blueberries and beans in a school setting led to a lot of lessons learned, the first phase of the project was a great collaborative effort between the school community, Urban Roots staff, and Friends, until the administration and teachers of the school changed directions just before the second phase was to be conducted. School environments tend to be nebulous from school year to school year and make it challenging for a multi-year project to be conducted.

Collaborating on a pilot study such as this one with multiple partners proved essential, as the project was able to continue in a new location, but still with involvement of kids, parents, and volunteers.

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Additional Information

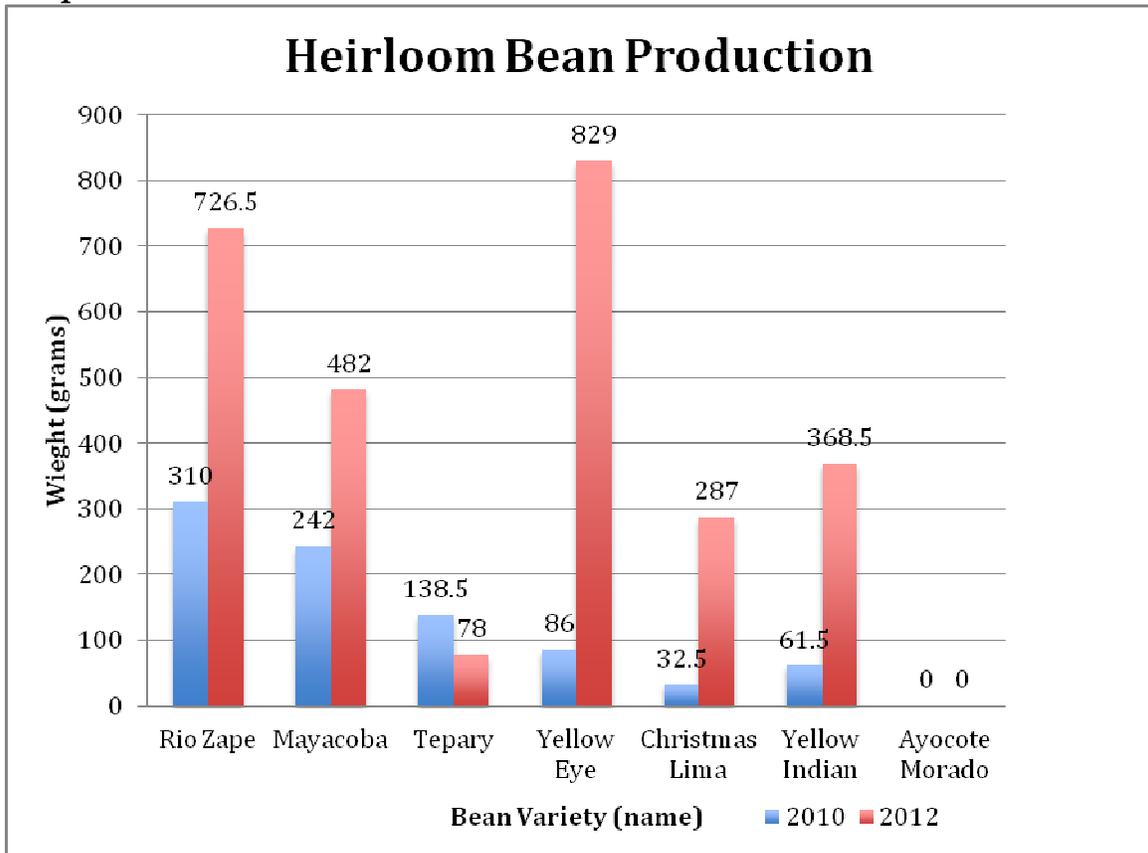
Attached:

Graph 1 – heirloom bean yield for both phases

Image set 1 – pictures of second phase of Blueberry Growing

Image set 2 – pictures of second phase of Beans in Hoop House

Graph 1: Heirloom Bean Yield for Both Phases



Rio Zape, Mayacoba and Yellow Eye are viable heirloom bean varieties to pursue for northern Nevada farmers

Image Set 1 – Pictures of Second Phase Blueberry Growing



Berries in grow bags on South side of Hoop House – Blueberries are not a viable option to pursue for northern Nevada farmers

Image Set 2 – Pictures of Second Phase Bean



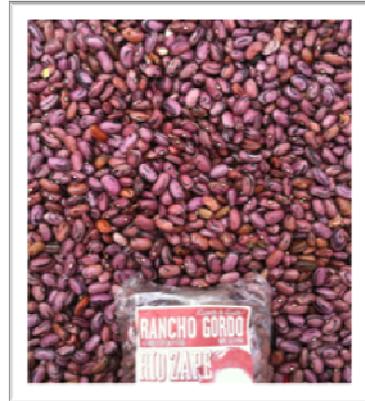
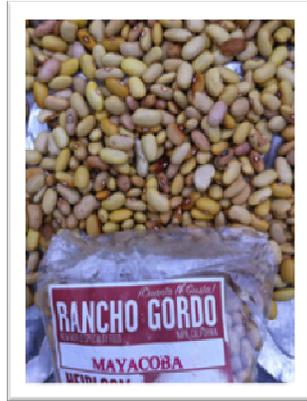
in Hoop House

Hoop House being built by volunteers Beans being planted by volunteers
Christmas Lima Bean Flower



Beans
growing in
the Hoop
House

August 2012



Best performing bean varieties: Yellow Eye, Mayacoba, Rio Zape

Project Title: Food Production/Farmers Market

Final Report

Project Summary

In an effort to promote locally grown produce the Lovelock Farmers Market has expanded to Battle Mountain and Winnemucca, which are predominantly hay producing regions. The project serves as a specialty crop production model for this region of Nevada in order to demonstrate that high-value production in Northern Nevada can be a viable means of farming in place of alfalfa crops. These efforts have resulted in a new specialty crop producer in Imlay, Nevada and an increased demand for locally grown produce in Battle Mountain.

The Specialty Crop Grant provided funding to initiate the Farmers Market Program in these areas as well as assist with collaboration between other farmers through the NevadaGrown network, Specialty Crop workshops and the annual Small Farm Conference. What started out as providing naturally grown produce to the Lovelock area has grown to impact other food deserts such as Hawthorne and Battle Mountain, all very rural areas with limited access to fresh fruits and vegetables.

The objectives of the project are listed below:

Increase consumer awareness and participation in consumption of Nevada grown products.

(October-December 2009)

- 2009 was the first year the Lovelock Farmers Market was established
- Producers from Fallon and Lovelock contributed to the produce and products sold at the market
- The senior voucher program was initiated in the Lovelock/Pershing County area for the first time
- Produce donations were made to the local Food Bank
- Created website to promote the Farmers Market, and Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) Basket program
- Attended Western Nevada College Specialty Crop Workshops (Lavender Workshop; Small Farm Conference, Soils & Weed Control)

(January-December 2010)

- Added Facebook event posting for Farmers Market promotion
- Increased networking with Fallon, Winnemucca, and other growers through NevadaGrown workshop attendance
- Created Farmers Market attendee email listing
- Joined Nevada Farmers Market Association
- Increased advertisement of Farmers Market through local newspaper and flyers
- Attended Western Nevada College Specialty Crop Small Farm Conference
- Added two 30' x 60' hoopouses
- Hosted elementary school field trip for 2nd and 3rd graders

(January-December 2011)

- Increased networking with Fallon, Winnemucca, and other growers through NevadaGrown workshop attendance
- Assisted other growers in putting up hoopouses (Steve Hernandez “Slanted Porch”; Alicia Craig – Imlay grower)
- Added two more 30' x 70' hoopouses
- Had Open House “Chamber Mixer” to showcase hoopouse construction, Nevada growing opportunities – attended by 255 people from the local and Reno areas
- Hosted field trip for special needs young adults
- Sold produce to local school district under Fresh Fruits/Vegetables program

(January-October 2012)

- Added/participated/started new markets in June 2012 to include Hawthorne, Winnemucca Sparks, and Imlay.
- Transported produce for other local producers to and from farmers markets as well as surplus to food deserts
- Showcased locally grown produce and the benefits of hoopouse growing to state and federal agencies: USDA and Western Nevada Development District personnel and members
- Provided farm tours to Nevada Food Bank personnel
- Provided free farm tours and hoopouse production workshops to general public on October 20 and 27, 2012

- Open House – Free U-Pick Tomatoes to general public on October 20 and 27, 2012

Providing Employment Opportunities:

Starting in 2009 and continuing currently we have provided regular employment for one part-time employee (20-25 hours per week) and several seasonal employees to help with specific projects such as planting, weeding, hoophouse building, etc. Originally we were able to employ only minimal but have now been able to provide continual employment of 20-25 hours per week for one individual as well as additional employment on as needed basis for specific farm projects.

Successful production and sale of high quality vegetables, fruits, nuts, flowers, and plants, production was expanded to include more vegetable varieties of tomatoes, zucchini, and cucumbers, and peppers. Two hoophouses were added and extended the growing season through October. In 2011 Doubletree Ranch took over Winnemucca Farmers Market at the Community Gardens, an area that has limited access to fresh produce. The 2012 farmers market season started mid-June due to mild weather and hoophouse protection crop production has been expanded to include: potatoes, more varieties of squash and cucumbers, flowers, multiple varieties of peppers as well as several varieties of tomatoes. In addition to Farmers Markets, produce from Doubletree and other local producers will be sold to the Great Basin Co-Op and surplus crops will be sent to the Nevada Food Bank. Farmers Markets have increased from the original 6 markets per season in Lovelock to a total of 70 markets: 7 markets/Hawthorne, 13 markets/Sparks Rail City Garden Center, 12 markets/Winnemucca, 14 markets/Lovelock, 2 markets/Battle Mountain, 22 at the Farm. Produce was also sold to two local restaurants (Sturgeons & LaCasita). As a member of the Fallon Small farm Collaborative, produce and value added products are made available to our customers (jams and bread from Lattin Farms, Quesco Fresco cheese from Sandhill Farms are examples).

Goals and Outcomes Achieved

The successful distribution and sales of locally grown produce has been accomplished. A reputation of providing quality naturally grown vegetables has been established.

The local Farmers Market is now a much-anticipated event in the communities of Lovelock, Winnemucca, Sparks, Hawthorne and Battle Mtn. We have added

value added products such as breads, jams and cheese to the offerings available to our customers.

Farmers Markets have increased from original 6 to 70 for 2012.

All goals have been accomplished with the exception of doing a 4-H project. While we attended the 4-H Leadership conference and trained on being a 4-H Leader, this still remains one of our future goals. We have involved youth through field trips and farm tours.

Beneficiaries

Twelve specialty crop producers in Northern Nevada benefited from this project. Producers gained access to a cold storage unit (matching contribution) where they were able to safely store their produce until market. The project leads networked with Nevada producers and industry stakeholders to identify those interested in participating in markets. This also allowed project participants to discuss methods for getting produce from various farms to market.

Approximately 130 students became informed on specialty crop production in Nevada in addition to the 255 individuals that attended the farm tour on hoop house production. Additional beneficiaries included consumers in the Pershing county, Churchill county, Mineral county, and Reno/Sparks area benefitted by having increased access to Nevada specialty crops.

Produce obtained through Farmers Collaborative members and sold at markets increasing the amount distribution across these very rural areas for Farmers that otherwise would not be able to travel these great distances to attend markets these include farmers from Fallon, Lovelock, and Winnemucca: Lattin Farms, Pioneer Farms, Workman's, Slanted Porch, Sandhill Farms, Salishe's Delicious, NanaDew Farms, Sweet Farms, MacDougall Apiary, Doubletree Ranch, Alicia Craig/Imlay, Luke's Orchard, and Community Gardens.

Lessons Learned

- Learned how to propagate plants from seed and transplant
- Learned how to grow in a hoop house – best planting times, how to expand the length of the growing season
- Learned how to advertise and promote the Farmers Market
- Learned customer service skills and appealing presentation of product

- Learned about soils, plant nutrients, pest control and how to grow naturally without pesticides or herbicides
- Developed long-lasting mutually beneficial relationships with other growers in Lovelock, Winnemucca, and Fallon
- Learned that we cannot do all the work ourselves and that we need help in setting up markets, planting, weeding, harvesting and monitoring plant development

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Additional Information

Press Releases (can be provided upon request)
Photos



Farmers Market (Lovlock) 2011

Project Title: Specialty Crop Institute Tribal & Rural Outreach

Project Summary

The purpose of this project was to expand upon the long term goals of the Specialty Crop Institute that include the following:

Workshops and training to underserved rural communities throughout the state. Outreach to Native Americans, veterans, and socially disadvantaged, beginning and limited-resource farmers/ranchers, continued development of partnerships and a network of regional organizations to provide innovative education and training to Nevada's small farms.

The project consisted of outreach to the Duck Valley Shoshone Paiute Tribe in Owyhee and surrounding rural farms in Elko and other counties. Located in Elko County, the reservation is in a region of the state that receives 95% of its agricultural income from livestock and 5% from crop production. The reservation had inquired to the SCI for training in specialty crop instruction earlier, and it was considered an ideal location to introduce specialty crop production to the reservation and outlying farmers.

Project Approach

Activities performed:

An advisory team was formed consisting of Ann Louhela, Specialty Crop Institute; Randy Emm, University of Nevada Cooperative Extension Indian Services; Ray Johnson, farmer advisor and owner of Custom Gardens Organic Farm; and Owyhee Unified School District staff. Three field trips, that included two workshops, were made to the reservation. The first trip in September 2009 assessed the needs and potential for specialty crop production on the reservation. The school garden at Owyhee Unified School was determined to be the best location to construct a hoop house to be used as a demonstration garden and as a source of fresh produce for the school. School staff committed to maintaining the hoop house, and the location would provide visibility and access to community members.

The second trip in April 2010 included a workshop and construction of a hoop house at Owyhee Unified School. A 20-by-30 foot hoop house was constructed by a team that included the SCI, UNCE, farmer Ray Johnson, staff and students of the school. Students and staff planted crops in the hoop house following the workshop. Approximately 20 local farmers and community members attended. Three of the farmers traveled from distances of 100+ miles. A third trip was made in September 2010 to assess progress of the hoop house and to provide additional training. Students and staff had planted the hoop

house earlier in the year, and it was full of crops ready for harvest. The project team helped harvest crops, planted cover crops to improve the soil during the winter months, and presented a workshop on how to improve future plantings and yields. Attendance was approximately ten people and was impeded by poor weather. Randy Emm, UNCE project partner, continues to make periodic trips and has provided continuing education in hoop house production. Farmer Ray Johnson returned with Emm in spring 2012 to teach farmers how to make repairs to the original hoop house from wind damage and to a few new hoop houses that had been constructed after the original workshop. Owyhee Indian Reservation is part of Emm's work responsibilities, and he regularly visits the site. As Extension Tribal Outreach coordinator, Emm works with the tribe on an ongoing basis.

Goals and Outcomes Achieved

One of the major goals of this project was to develop a pilot program to implement at reservations and remote rural areas in Nevada. This project has met this goal as hoop houses have been built at several other reservations since the original Owyhee hoop house. The SCI conducted a hoop house workshop at Yerington Indian Reservation in January 2011, and Randy Emm, UNCE, has conducted workshops at Schurz, Pyramid and Natchez Reservations in Northern Nevada and in Logandale in Southern Nevada.

A successful partnership was developed with Randy Emm, UNCE Indian Services, to continue hoop house education at Indian reservations. Staff at the Owyhee Unified School are still growing specialty crops and maintaining the hoop house built in 2010. The harvests are used in school menus and distributed to community members. Five reservation ranchers have received NRCS funding and constructed hoop houses on the reservation. Representatives from several tribes now attend SCI workshops on an ongoing basis to learn more about growing specialty crops on their reservations. Rural farmers that attended the Owyhee workshop have traveled to Northern Nevada for additional workshops.

While funding from this grant has been depleted, rural outreach continues with other grant awarded after this funding. January 2011 - Low-cost Hoop House Construction Workshop was held at Yerington Indian Reservation. 138 participants attended including members of five reservations. Dan Drost, Utah State University, conducted a workshop to demonstrate how to build the low cost USU model hoop house. It was also a train-the-trainer workshop. Emm and Johnson were taught how to build the low-cost hoop house, and they have conducted additional workshops.

The SCI continues its outreach to Nevada's tribal reservations and provides information and resources for specialty crop production and hoop house construction. Several reservations in Northern Nevada send staff to SCI workshops on a continuing basis to learn more about specialty crop production.

Other Outcomes Achieved

This project included the outcomes listed below. Most all were achieved: Attendance of at least 20 different participants at both workshops - 20 participants attended the first workshop, and ten attended the second workshop. Stormy weather resulted in lower attendance at the second workshop. Implementation or increased production of specialty crops within one year by at least 50% of attendees (an increase in production by at least 10 participants).

In addition to the school hoop house, five tribal members received NRCS funding to build hoop houses and have completed construction. Two rural ranchers built hoop houses and report continued successful production. Several tribal members have built small-scale hoop houses on their land for personal food consumption after touring the demonstration hoop house at the school, Increased consumption of fresh fruits and vegetables on the Reservation, potentially being disbursed through Senior and WIC programs. The school reported that it is using its harvests in school menus and also distributing community members.

Distribution through Senior and WIC programs has not been attained as the school hoop house does not provide sufficient production. This process will also require approval through bureaucratic processes. Small-scale hoop houses for home production are providing increased fresh produce to community members. Workshop attendees and Emm report that the reservation is experiencing newly kindled interest in gardening and specialty crop production in a climate that was previously considered too cold to successfully grow crops.

The goal of this project was to provide specialty crop training to two underserved populations of Nevada: Indian reservations and remote rural communities. Long term goals were to help diversify ranching communities to that of more high-value specialty crop production and to increase farm income, local food security and the health of rural communities. The short term goals were met, and progress is being made towards the long term goals with continued outreach and training. The ranchers who received NRCS funding plan to implement commercial production for increased farm income.

Lessons Learned

Part of the project plans included continuing education for the reservation from Randy Emm. He reported that one challenge of building hoop houses on Indian reservations is the high rate of turnover of tribal administrators which can adversely affect projects. New administrators sometimes have different priorities and choose to not continue the projects of previous administrators. While the staff at Owyhee Reservation continues to maintain the hoop house, Emm reported that a hoop houses built at another reservation was not maintained. Perseverance, continuing outreach, and working proactively with new administrators led to rekindled interest at the site. Successful crop production should also help to keep reservation staff motivated to maintain the structures and production.

As hoop houses become more popular, farmers and schools in rural and urban areas are experiencing challenges in building them due to new building constraints imposed by local governments. While the intent of public safety is good, the regulations can be burdensome and rigorous. Working proactively with local governments is proving to be the best solution.

A secondary challenge that was overcome was the location. When SCI staff developed the proposal for this project, we recognized that it presented many challenges, and accomplishing our goals would not be easy. The SCI program was in its infancy, barely a year old. The project was located on the opposite end of the state, in a remote area with cold climate and difficult growing conditions. Construction materials would need to be transported as they would not be available in the area. We would also be working in an economically-depressed area with limited resources.

Our impetus to move forward was the request for our services from Owyhee Indian Reservation. Tribal members wanted to improve living conditions by implementing specialty crop production. It would help their community financially and in health benefits. However, they had no regional services to provide the specialized training for specialty crop production. 95% of area agriculture was ranches and alfalfa production.

The reservation's request opened our eyes to the needs of Nevada's underserved communities and to our responsibility to address these needs. Relationships were built and collaborations formed to accomplish our goals. In April 2010, twenty people gathered in freezing weather at Owyhee Indian

Reservation for a hoop house workshop. As a result of this workshop, in January 2011, less than a year later, project partners gathered 138 people to construct a hoop house at Yerington Indian Reservation. Hoop house construction and production has proliferated in Nevada as a result of the Yerington and subsequent hoop house workshops. Yes, the bigger the challenge, the greater the reward.

Beneficiaries

The beneficiaries of this project include the underserved populations of Nevada's reservations and rural communities who have limited access to training compared to more populated areas. In addition to providing potential increased income to ranchers, the project has increased access to wholesome fresh foods to the reservation and rural ranches for their own consumption. These populations have limited access to fresh foods, and it is more expensive due to transportation costs.

The collaboration between organizations (WNC, UNCE and NRCS) has benefitted producers, communities and the organizations. NRCS received additional hoop house applications due to the project outreach. UNCE developed a hoop house program that it has utilized on additional reservations. The SCI gained access to new program participants on reservations through its partnership with the UNCE Tribal program and succeeded in expanding its program.

Contact Information

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Attached photos:

September 2009 - Owyhee school garden before construction of hoop house. Plants in the field were killed by frost and inedible.



September 2010 - Owyhee school garden one year later with a thriving harvest.



January 2011 - Workshop participants constructing a hoop house at Yerington Indian Reservation. Funds from a different grant project were used to produce the workshop. However, the workshop was a result of the original Owyhee grant.



Project Title: Slanted Porch Hoop House and Farmer's Market Improvements

Project Summary:

The Slanted Porch is a farm-to-table restaurant located in a predominantly agricultural community in West Central Nevada. Project Leader Steve Hernandez anticipated the importance of encouraging customers to buy locally grown produce from small family farmers. He intended for the Slanted Porch to serve as a gathering location for farmers and customers to meet, establish relationships and exchange goods. The initial motivations for the Slanted Porch Grant project were to construct a highly visible hoop house on the restaurant property that would allow raising produce throughout the year. The hoop house would become a talking point for customers and other producers about local produce and the challenge of growing throughout the year. Secondary motivations for the Slanted Porch grant include making improvements on a farmer's market on the Slanted Porch property.

Project Approach:

The first part of the Slanted Porch Grant Project involved the purchase and construction of a hoop house / premium high style tunnel on the restaurant property. The initial purchase was completed in January of 2011. Framework assembly on the hoop house continued as weather would permit and was completed in April of 2011. Finish carpentry work was completed in August of 2011.

During the 2011 construction period, relationships were established with the Great Basin Food Cooperative to promote and distribute specialty crops raised at the Slanted Porch and by other small family farmers in the Fallon area. Also during this period the Slanted Porch applied for a Nevada State Growers Permit to allow for the sale of specialty crops grown on the property. Planting of the hoop house commenced in August of 2011, Specialty crops included: Asian greens, spinach and beets (Detroit red, Chiogga and Golden). Follow on planting included: cilantro, chives, leeks, mixed baby greens, romaine lettuce, radishes, parsley and peas.

In February 2012, Project Leader Steve Hernandez and assistant Kelli Kelly attended a conference sponsored by Western Nevada College Specialty Crop Institute with Eliot Coleman. Information learned at these conferences led to a new approach towards planting and maintaining the Slanted Porch hoop house. The beginning of 2012 also marked the establishment of a relationship with Full Circle Compost. In response to initial growing issues, a soil study was

conducted allowing Project Leader Steve Hernandez to amend the soil in order to create a healthier growing environment for specialty crops.

The Slanted Porch hoop house was included in a tour by the Western Nevada College Specialty Crop Institute Small Farm Conference participants in March of 2012. During this tour, Steve Hernandez was able to discuss the challenges and successes that have been faced during the hoop house project. Ashley Jeppson was present to perform a site inspection the following notes/observations we made: During the 2012 Nevada Small Farm Conference, a hoop house tour and workshop was conducted. Approximately 30 people were in attendance and informed about various forms of hoop houses available and their durability in Nevada's climate for season extension. Project Coordinator, Steve Hernandez discussed the process of getting the hoop house and made several helpful suggestions to participants that were interested in hoop house production. Several varieties of lettuce and herbs were in the ground and thriving.

Craig De-Witt with Full Circle Compost gave a presentation on the various forms of compost that are beneficial for specialty crop production. Every participant was supplied with a detailed soil test report that was based on samples taken from the slanted porch hoop house site. Participants were educated on how to read a soil test and take the proper steps to resolving potential soil problems. There was strong participation from audience members. Steve Hernandez discussed what steps he took in addressing his boron and potassium issues with his ground soil. He also went over how the abundance of boron and potassium will impact specialty crop production. Steve discussed the benefits of season extension and how he was able to develop a sturdy hoop house.

Several successful specialty crop producers were in attendance and provided details regarding their marketing, production, and composting techniques in order to further assist interested growers. Steve expressed to all participants that hoop house tours are welcome in order to help people develop season extending practices.

Phase II

At the end of last reporting period, Project Leader Steve Hernandez believed that funds from the Slanted Porch grant may need to be re-allocated due to the initial struggles with the City of Fallon regarding establishment of a farmer's market at the Slanted Porch. However, in the early months of 2012, The Slanted Porch was approached by a new organization, The Fallon Farmer's Collaborative, (FFC) another specialty crop block grant recipient. The FFC

expressed interest in working with the Slanted Porch to establish a farmer's market on the property. The Fallon Farmer's Collaborative Market at the Slanted Porch opened in June of 2012 and continued every Thursday through the beginning of September. The market was primarily populated by specialty crop producers from the Churchill county area and was regularly attended by members of the community. The Slanted Porch was able to make some additional purchases from the grant for pop-up tents and misters to support the farmer's market on the restaurant property.

After the conclusion of the market, individual producers still set-up and sold specialty crops on the restaurant property through the beginning of November. Through collaboration with farmer John Shank, Slanted Porch produce was sold at farmer's markets throughout West Central Nevada to include Hawthorne and Winnemucca. Additionally, The Slanted Porch has provided produce to a new start-up local produce store in Fallon, The Better Daze Market. Currently, The Slanted Porch hoop house is entirely planted and productive. Produce in the hoop house currently includes: Detroit Red Beets, Bok Choy, Pak Choy, Broccoli, Cabbage, Chives, Leeks, Spinach, Mixed Baby Lettuce and Garlic. Seven specialty crop producers and four to six artisans participated in the market.

Goals and Outcomes Achieved:

Short-term goals of the Slanted Porch Hoop House Project included: the construction of a hoop house, increasing the growing season, establishing relationships with other producers and distributors of specialty crops, educating consumers about the importance of buying local, providing a venue for the sale of local specialty crops raised by small producers, and providing shade structures and misters for farmers participating in the market. These goals have been achieved.

The long-term goals of the Slanted Porch project include establishing an educational aspect to the hoop house that will serve as a locale for teaching children about where food comes from and the importance of buying local. While there have been some setbacks towards achieving this goal, steps have been taken towards the creation of this educational aspect. Project Assistant Kelli Kelly addressed the Churchill County High School Nutrition classes in October of 2012. Her speaking points focused around the local specialty crops that are available from small producers in the Churchill County area – and the impact of buying local. Following her address, the student prepared projects that focused around buying local and preparing seasonal foods available from Fallon producers. This relationship is anticipated to continue during future semesters.

Beneficiaries:

Beneficiaries of The Slanted Porch Hoop House and Farmer's Market Project include local small farmers and specialty producers, artisans and the community at large. Fallon is a rural area where access to produce is limited the market and venue has increased consumption and education of specialty crops throughout the region. The hoop house presentation had 30 attendees, the local farmers collaborative of 14 farmers 7 of which were at the market.

Farmer's Market Participants include:

- Fallon Farmer's Collaborative
- Salisha's Delicious – Salisha Odum
- Sweet Farm – Terri and John Sweet
- Lattin Farm – Rick Lattin
- Workman Farm – Vicki Workman
- Pioneer Farm – Scott Goodpasture
- Sand Hill Dairy – Isidro Alves

Lessons Learned:

There have been a variety of lessons learned throughout this project. On a practical level, project participants have learned about the challenges of growing produce in a hoop house. This includes the importance of soil quality, pest management and water management in a contained environment. In addition, participants have significantly increased their knowledge with regards to crop rotation and effective seeding and planting techniques to increase hoop house productivity.

On a larger scope, this project has helped the Fallon community learn more about small farmers and specialty crops available within the Churchill County area. Community members have been presented with an opportunity to "Know their Farmers" and have responded in kind by purchasing more local produce. Further, an important lesson has been learned about overcoming setbacks and achieving goals through dedication and commitment. Essentially, the community in Fallon now has a diverse, productive and sustainable Farmer's Market despite initial concern about execution. And The Slanted Porch has a hoop house that is productive throughout the calendar year despite setbacks in soil quality.

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Photos: Slanted Porch Hoophouse and Farmers Market 2011, 2012



Project Title: GBFC Promoting Specialty Crop Producers

Project Summary

GBCFC received this sub-grant in June of 2011. The goal of the project was to provide better labeling and exposure for Nevada specialty crops sold at the Great Basin Food Cooperative (GBFC) in Reno, Nevada. Prior to GBFC moving into a larger building, Nevada produce did not have clear labeling and little if any information was provided about Nevada farmers. This project was awarded to develop signage and farm bios that would clearly identify each specialty crop producer by name, their farm operation, and produce they grew. The signage helped consumers to identify producers based on previous business and farm information posted at the Cooperative.

The unique and specific signage created for Nevada farmers and products has helped consumers to learn about Nevada specialty crop producers. This has encouraged healthy competition as consumers become better affiliated with the actual producers and in turn make purchasing decisions based on quality and consistency of the local product. To date GBCFC has over 5,000 current member-owner shoppers and we are open to the public every day from 9am – 9pm.

Project Approach

In order to accomplish the items above GBFC contracted with specialty signage company, Saguro Signs, to create in-store signage for the new co-op location at 240 Court St. Reno, NV 89501.

Project Approach:

In order to accomplish project goals, GBFC contracted with a specialty signage company, Saguro Signs. The in-store signage included framed farmer bios, an adaptable large food shed map mural, specialty signage in the produce department for each Nevada Specialty Crop producer and multiple wooden department signs for local specialty crops such as vegetables, seeds and fruit. The sub-recipient provided matching funds on the food shed mural so that only specialty crops were promoted with grant funding.

Creating a labeling system of his type has provided more familiarity with local specialty crops that the cooperative stocks. Promotional signage has also helped increase sales for producers. Due to consumer exposure, the GBFC is frequently asked for the contact information of specialty crop producers allowing consumers to broaden the market and prompt more competition between producers.

Goals & Outcomes Achieved:

When the project began, GBFC was working with roughly 30 specialty crop producers. To date this number has stayed the same since some of the producers have stopped production while some new farms have also been established. During 2012 the GBFC had 4 new producers sell specialty crops to the cooperative and were encouraged to establish farm branding.

Over 150 Small Farm Conference participants were notified of the GBFC move into a larger building, and the Project Lead was able to speak on behalf of the cooperative and how farmers can participate. While performing outreach, the NDA also mentioned the cooperative as a marketing opportunity for new producers.

One additional goal that the GBFC has decided to move forward on is creating a logo that represents Nevada specialty crops. This will be a quick way for consumers to identify whether a product is grown in Nevada and will help consumers identify the term “specialty crops” and what that term means. This logo will also be used on future projects.

Beneficiaries:

The primary beneficiaries of the project were the specialty crop producers that sell their produce through the GBFC. This project also helped consumers increase their knowledge of specialty crops grown in Nevada, farm operations located in Nevada, and overall where their food comes from.

Lessons Learned:

The new GBFC building was scheduled to open on September 1, 2011, however due to construction delays they were unable to accomplish this. The delay provided Saguro Signs with more time to work on the details and aesthetics of each custom sign. Saguro Signs has been able to manufacture the majority of the work listed in their quote at their facility. All of the signage arrived on site January of 2012. GBFC was able to get the signs displayed by their revised opening date of February 11, 2012. The project lead was able to learn and adapt to the new opening schedule, which turned out in their favor.

Last year we did not increase our specialty crop producers at the coop. Having never done this type of a project before, we underestimated how much time it would take just to get the system up and operational. All of our time and energy went into that. That was definitely a huge learning lesson for us. Now that we seem to have reached a point of stability we are hopeful that this year we can direct more time and energy into achieving the goal of adding on more specialty crop producers to the Dropp system.



(Food Shed map)



(GBFC Produce Displays)

Contact Information

Amber Sallaberry

Project Title: Fallon Small Farm Collaborative

Project Summary:

Nevada farmers struggle to compete with California producers and simply can't produce the variety or quantity of specialty crops that California can. In addition to this Nevada growers are often unaware of how to market their product. As a result of this struggle Nevada farmers have been looking at the feasibility of combining crops grown and collaborating in marketing Nevada grown produce. The primary goals of the project were to increase participation from small northern Nevada farmers in Reno area markets and to increase consumer recognition of locally grown Nevada products by assisting farmers in branding their products as grown in Nevada. The project also piloted the feasibility of combining crops from several small farmers and presenting them with NevadaGrown branding/marketing. In order to achieve these goals Churchill Economic Development Authority (CEDA) collaborated with the Nevada Grown Farmers Association and small-scale specialty crop producers in the Fallon area.

Project Approach:

Activities performed during the grant period included the development of branding materials for markets. Materials included logos, banners, flags, business cards and a market Facebook page (operated by the Collaborative). Administrative activities included the following; selection of markets to participate in, purchasing of market space, supplies and sampling permits, scheduling of farmers to transport and sell at the different markets, and the maintenance of market supplies.

Farmers and project staff also completed orientations with market managers on the collaborative model. This activity was performed to encourage more participation by market managers by pointing out that this model would increase Nevada farmers' participation at their markets.

Project partner, NevadaGrown chose appropriate markets to participate in, provided NevadaGrown marketing materials (flags & bags), and attended markets in order to provide marketing suggestions. NevadaGrown also helped a collaborative member with logo development.

Project Leader, Eric Grimes provided additional administrative support through staff members Kari Maffi and Rick Lattin. CEDA played a unique role in developing an administrative support structure for the Collaborative as it developed and ran its own market in Fallon. Farmer cooperation and

coordination of activities was simplified with the use of CEDA's conference room facilities, their listserv notification capabilities, and the development of an e-mail and telephone list of participating farmers.

A development that was not anticipated was the collaborative's decision to start their own market. This included the purchase of a City of Fallon business license for the Fallon Farm Collaborative and finding a non-profit organization to sponsor the market structure.

Goals and Outcomes Achieved:

A. Activities

The performance goals and measurable outcomes of this project were accomplished through the following activities:

- 1) Designed, purchased, and displayed marketing materials including signs, banners, logos for the collaborative and select participating farmers.
- 2) Purchased canopies and tables for use at farmers' Markets
- 3) Payment of fees for market spaces and sampling permits
- 4) Farmer collaboration in boxing, transporting, and selling collaborative-grown products at area markets.

B. Goal Achievements

- 1) The goals of achieving participation from 6 farmers and attending at least 24 markets were accomplished. During 2012 several new farmers were added to the collaborative group by expanding the markets served. New markets served included the Fall Victorian Square Market in Sparks (Urban area) and the Farmers Market at Slanted Porch in Fallon (Rural Nevada). The total number of farmers that participated at the market was thirteen. The total number of markets attended was 84. A core group of 6 farmers participated in multiple markets with the remainder participating in an occasional market. The majority of participating farmers reported an increase in sales due to the addition of markets attended and the sharing of sales responsibilities between the cooperating farmers.
- 2) The project lead believes that the goal of increasing consumer recognition of Fallon and NevadaGrown products was achieved based on anecdotal reports and increased farmer sales. The sub-recipient failed to collect hard data to support this due to challenges associated with collecting such data other than monitoring farmer sales. The NevadaGrown website was undergoing a re-do during the market period and the data expected was unable to be collected.

Beneficiaries:*A. Groups that benefited from the completion of this project's accomplishments.*

As a direct result of this project, Fallon area farmers were able to collaborate and market at four different market venues by sharing space, cooperatively marketing produce, and by cooperatively transporting produce. Markets attended included Saturday California Avenue and Summit Sierra in Reno, Fall Great Basin Brewery market in Sparks, and the Slanted Porch Market in Fallon. Farmers also sent produce through the collaborative to rural markets in Hawthorne, Fernley, Lovelock, Winnemucca, and Battle Mountain. The farmers benefitted by having access to additional markets which was demonstrated by increased sales. The markets themselves benefitted by having additional NevadaGrown farmers and products present in their markets. The Fallon community benefitted by the re-start of a market in the community. Farmers market customers benefitted by increased access to fresh and local produce.

B. Quantitative data/beneficiaries affected

Thirteen farmers attended at least one market over the season. All goals of the grant involving participating farmers and markets attended were exceeded. A secondary benefit was the collaborative's decision to sponsor their own market at the Slanted Porch in Fallon. This gave the participating farmers the opportunity to learn about the farmers market process from beginning to end. The collaborative formed an organizational structure, purchased a business license, obtained a fictitious name certificate from Churchill County, set up a bank account and ran a successful summer market.

Lessons Learned:

The project leads and participants learned that encouraging farmers to work together in achieving a common goal requires consistent facilitation and attention to detail. The logistics of attending markets over a broad geographic area requires advance planning and coordination. The project lead and participants also learned that some farmers aren't ready to sell their products at market because they haven't quite learned how to plant, grow, harvest, and prepare a crop for market. Further work needs to be performed with farmers to provide assistance with pre-market planning and implementation.

A positive outcome of this project was the development of a core group of farmers interested in and currently seeing the advantages of participating in group projects. Participating farmers were given the opportunity to manage their own market. An unexpected outcome of the project was the acceptance of the group marketing model by the Reno area market managers.

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Project Title: Broadcast Media Plan Promoting Specialty Crop Industry in Nevada

Project Summary:

This project was needed to expand SCBGP outreach efforts through radio promotion. The purpose of this project was to increase awareness of the program and to seek out eligible applicants utilizing a new advertising approach.

Project Approach:

NDOA partnered with the Agriculture Council of Nevada (NAC), a non-profit organization, whose primary mission is to promote Nevada Agriculture. The NDOA and NAC purchased airtime on three talk stations (KDWN, KLAV, and KOH). The ad spot ran for roughly two weeks and had a tremendous public response.

Goals and Outcomes Achieved:

There were approximately 200 listeners that contacted NDOA in response to the ad. Of those that responded, 30 eligible individuals appeared to have an eligible project. These individuals were added to the contact lists for future award notifications, demonstrating a long term outcome of the project.

Beneficiaries:

Approximately 200 radio listeners benefited from this project by increasing their knowledge about the SCBGP. This form of advertising allowed new individuals to learn about the program and put these individuals in contact with

SCBGP staff to discuss potential projects. The project also benefitted SCBGP staff by allowing them to determine whether radio advertising was cost-effective and resulted in a strong turn-around of applicants.

Lessons Learned:

Though the response to the ad was large, the message intended in the ad material was not what NDOA requested. This development was unforeseen because the advertiser used a 10 second spot connected to weather and traffic, which was a spin off from the ad material. That particular spot led listeners to believe that funding was for greenhouses. The message was misconstrued from statements regarding hoop houses. The message content included the following points: Specialty Crop supported projects for healthy, fresh, and local food. The message gave listeners the Department of Agriculture's web-site and contact information. It indicated that interested Nevada residents can apply for \$25,000 of funding to grow fresh fruits, vegetables, tree nuts, and floriculture. Individuals that are non-profits, organizations, and schools are encouraged to apply. The advertisement also included a statement that said "you will receive funding to build your own min-greenhouse". This was the statement that should of read (can receive funding for hoop house production). The spin off that ran with the traffic and weather said (receive \$25,000 for a greenhouse). This was due to the information about the program being misinterpreted by those that scripted and aired the ad. I believe that it merely is in an advertiser's nature to use catchy spin-offs to grab the listener's attention. This is what it did do however; the unfortunate circumstance was that the catch phrases used misconstrued the intended message in many aspects. Since the ad was misleading and capital expenditures are obviously an unallowable cost the information was pulled immediately. This advertisement was developed and aired before the Specialty Crop Manager was hired. In the future the manager will not use media and print advertisements/program statements will be approved by the manager before released.

The advertiser was notified immediately to pull the advertisement. This was rectified through communication via the web-site and phone calls, where the correct information was provided to listeners that heard the ad. Agriculture had put a document on the web-site which discussed verbatim the actual guidelines of the SCBGP as it was intended. This was on the web-site in red indicating information regarding the KOH ad. As phone calls came in the correct information was provided and listeners were told that the funding is not for greenhouses and has many other intended purposes. In the future the program manager will use print advertisement versus media. This will prevent an occurrence as this in the future. Print material will provide NDOA the

opportunity to approve, proof, and finalize what is published. This has already proved successful with the recent publication of an ad in Nevada Magazine. The message was approved and verified by NDOA prior to printing.

Contact Person:

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Project Title: Specialty Crop Program Coordinating Assistant

Project Summary:

The objective of this project was to promote and improve outreach, education, program goals and interest for the Nevada Specialty Crop Program. Outreach and education was accomplished through; articles, publications, workshop attendance, and a web-site.

Project Approach:

The purpose of this project was to enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops by allowing staff to extend outreach throughout Nevada. Through various forms of outreach such as brochures, direct assistance at workshops, updating the Nevada SCBGP website, and through NDOA workshops.

The Assistant Coordinator has performed outreach at five educational workshops, two Small Farm Conferences, and three stakeholder meetings. The Assistant Coordinator prepared a press release for the Winnemucca Publisher and prepared outreach literature through newsletters and additional outlets. After the establishment of a Nevada Specialty Crop Web-site a sub-recipient web page was established. Up until October of 2012 the website had over 1235 hits. The website has now been moved to

http://agri.nv.gov/Plant/SpecialtyCrop/Specialty_Crop_Block_Grant_Program/. The development of promotional materials has increased program interest as well as improved the program for those already participating. Program staff have received twice the number of inquires than previous years, indicating that outreach was successful. The Assisting Coordinator has also helped perform sub-recipients site visits and has documented site visits accordingly.

January 17th, 2012 a workshop was held by Program staff to help interested applicants during the 2012 RFP process. The Coordinating Assistant compiled hand-out materials and presented on how to develop Expected Measurable

Outcomes. The workshop encompassed program guidelines, provided one-on-one assistance, and discussed previously funded projects.

A Trade show was attended during February of 2012 in order to present the 2012 RFP, previously funded projects, and to seek out eligible applicants. The 2012 Small Farm Conference (SFC) was also attended. There were approximately 200 participants present at the SFC. program literature was made available to participants which included a previously funded newsletter, the 2012 RFP, SCBGP brochure, and a tri-fold poster board display. The Assistant Coordinator presented program information during a value added session where a previously funded project was also presented.

During May of 2012, the Assistant Coordinator presented to 200 plus K-6th grade students on what specialty crops are and nutritional benefits they provide. Students were able to see specialty crop plants including tomatoes, peppers, strawberries, squash, and basil. Students were also informed on how these plants grow and how each individual fruit/vegetable are good for their bodies. Students participated throughout each session and appeared to be excited about how specialty crops help their hair, bones, teeth, heart, and muscles grow.

Goals and Outcomes Achieved:

The goal of increasing outreach efforts to reach more active farmers, eligible applicants, transitioning farmers and new producers was achieved. The Nevada Small Farm Conference has a large portion of participants that are either new producers, transitioning farmers, or are researching new methods of growing and marketing their products. By attending the SFC, the Assistant Coordinator was able to provide program information to the 200 participants in attendance that fell within this project's target audience. In addition to this, six WNC workshops were attended in order to perform program outreach with an estimated 50 participants present per workshop.

In order to increase application submissions, program staff hosted a workshop in January of 2012 to assist applicants with the RFP. Over 200 contacts were notified of the workshop and 30 individuals signed up. Approximately 20 individuals attended the all day workshop. 17 letters of intent to apply for the 2012 application were received and 10 completed applications were received. The goal of 25 applicants was not achieved, however program staff will continue working towards this goal.

Over 200 k-6th grade students increased their awareness of specialty crops in Nevada and how these crops benefit them nutritionally.

Beneficiaries:

Gearing outreach towards a target audience allowed more farmers, consumers, distributors, and educators to learn about the program. The Nevada specialty crop industry benefitted from this project by increasing awareness of specialty crops grown in Nevada. Producers benefitted because they were informed about resources and collaboratives available to help them enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops. Consumers were informed about the benefits of consuming specialty crops and how these nutritious crops can be grown in Nevada soil.

Lessons Learned:

Program staff were able to learn about different resources available to promote the program and the benefits of attending industry stakeholder workshops. Program staff now better understand how to help sub-recipients and the resources needed in order to prompt complete and timely reports, better communication, and appropriate record keeping. The project also provided insight regarding future resources that can be utilized to reach new individuals and encourage more application submissions.

Contact Person:

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Project Title: Nevada Specialty Crop Manager NV Marketing Office Projects

Project Summary

The purpose of this project was to hire personnel to manage and promote the Nevada Specialty Crop Block Grant Program in an effort to achieve and maintain a successful program that adheres to the guidelines set fourth by the Agriculture Marketing Service Office. The project set out to reach and provided assistance to Nevada specialty crop producers in development of production, marketing, and promotion strategies and techniques. The project also sought to provide opportunities for specialty crop research, education, and local trade enhancement for growers.

Project Approach

The objective of this project is to further enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops in Nevada through; program monitoring, education, and assistance. The objectives have and will continue to be accomplished with program staff.

The State Coordinator has accomplished the following:

- Developed a policies document for sub-grantees, who must sign and agree to terms which delineates program expectations, statute, federal and state regulations as well as addresses ethical use of funding.
- Set up a Face book page for the Nevada specialty Crop Program in order to increase program awareness and to disburse the release of the RFP and make program announcements for upcoming workshops and other items.
- The State Coordinator attends stakeholder meetings, events, and workshops in order to identify state priorities, address industry issues, and perform program outreach. These include participation in the Small Farm Conference Meeting to ensure the specialty crop industry is represented and receiving education opportunities through the conference. This also includes participating in various committees to represent the specialty crop industry.
- The State Coordinator has worked with local publications to target specific areas throughout Nevada to extend outreach by releasing four different advertisements encouraging future applicants. As well as created a flyer for distribution at workshops.
- The State Coordinator and Assistant continue to change and improve program literature to adapt to changing industry needs and outreach objectives.
- Reviews and Approves request For Reimbursement Forms from Sub-recipients.

- Staff continues to compile performance reports and submit in a timely manner.
- Perform reconciliations of program expenses to match against Fiscal records.
- Staff Conduct Site-Visits, following up with findings, and work with recipients to accomplish program objectives.
- Manage sub-contracts including; update and seek approval of contract form through the Nevada attorney Generals Office, enter into sub-awards, maintain program files, and get approvals from authorized personnel
- Participated in the Grow Nevada Committee to provide feedback and input on growing the local produce system and increasing the food security through use of local growers. July through October 2012.
- Attended a cut-flower workshop over the summer 2012.
- Attended State of Nevada Grant User workshop and Grant Writing to learn about grant policies and writing to further assist applicants in applying for the SCBGP. October 2012.
- Conducted Workshop in January 2012 to assist future applicants. The SCBGP Manager presented on the objectives and guidelines of the SCBGP. The USDA, AMS guidance document was reviewed, examples of appropriate projects, and the state application process.

Goals and Outcomes Achieved

During January 2012 program staff hosted a workshop in order to increase application submissions and to assist applicants with the RFP. Over 200 contacts were notified of the workshop and 30 individuals signed up. Approximately 20 individuals attended the all day workshop. 17 letters of intent to apply for the 2012 application were received and 10 completed applications were received. The goal of 25 applicants was not achieved; however program staff will continue working towards this goal.

Program goals to compile sub recipient information was achieved by setting up excel files with sub grantee contact information and a contact list was developed. Files were created and organized for each recipient each file contains performance reports, site-visits, correspondence, contract information, scope of work, and request for reimbursements. Electronic files are also kept for each parent award and sub- recipient. An actual data base for this was determined costly and unnecessary; the organizing of information in electronic and hard copy format has been very effective.

Last we have looked into and will continue to strive for a multi-state project that would be appropriate for the our state, The State did apply for a project to implement a Good Agriculture Practices Cost share program the state is taking steps to pilot this program currently, details to come with reporting in parent award #1474.

State Staff continue to perform outreach and assistance to growers and potential farmers/producers. Staff continues to work towards creating a collaborative effort across the state to specialty crop enhancement opportunities and continue to increase awareness by participating and performing outreach at functions in various areas throughout the state. We also continue to seek and support projects that will further enhance the specialty crop industry and products.

Beneficiaries

The State of Nevada's new, disadvantaged and continuing producers have been impacted by having staff available in which they can have questions and concerns answered effectively and promptly. They receive information about the program as to how to apply, utilize funds and develop projects. Staff works to connect partnerships where they would be more successful as well as serve as a resource in the specialty crop area. We are able to direct and answer questions that otherwise producers would be left looking for education and other opportunities to enhance and or become a specialty crop producer. With the addition of staff, the program is now able to reach rural areas, attend functions, and provide better assistance to those in outlining areas.

Secondly, staff has and continues to meet deadlines for reports and other documentation. Economically the producers of Nevada have been impacted by the selection of projects that enhance and assist specialty crop producers that they otherwise would not have access to; which has increased the ability to sell and distribute specialty crops.

Lessons Learned

Staff continues to improve guidelines, policies and contracts to further create good protocols and improve applicant success. While we continue to craft the perfect documents incidents do still occur which leads to better improvement in the future. Staff has learned through these trials how to better manage projects and what is vital to successful performance. One of these is performing periodic site-visits; this perhaps is the best tool to managing performance success. A second lesson learned is how important it is to continue to be involved in the industry movements to learn and identify what the industries needs are to continue to grow and develop.

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Additional Information

http://agri.nv.gov/Plant/SpecialtyCrop/Specialty_Crop_Block_Grant_Program/

<http://www.facebook.com/pages/Nevada-Specialty-Crop-Block-Grant/148629888568537?fref=ts>