



Building Farmers in the West: Innovative Approaches to Engage and Evaluate a New Set of Stakeholders

**Dawn Thilmany, C. Wilson Gray, Jo Ann Warner
On Behalf of
Building Farmers in the West Team**



Engaging a New Clientele: Guiding Principles



- **The Motivation and Approach**
 - ◆ **History and Partnership Driven Growth**
- **Locally-Driven Programs**
 - ◆ **Leveraging Expertise through Engagement**
- **Evaluating as a Key to Engaging and Growing our Impact**
 - ◆ **A look at how we Track Progress**



From seed to sprout



- Idea is planted
- Cultivated at RMA 2006 Milwaukee
- Concept explored in Boulder County
- Launched fall 2007
- WCRME and SARE funds to expand statewide in 2009





To full growth

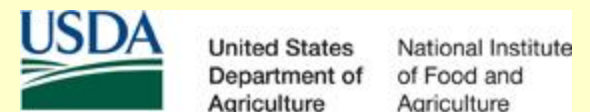
- USDA-NIFA BFRDP 2009 – 2012; renewal 2012 – 2015 for BFW



This material is based upon work supported by NIFA under Award Number 2012-49400-19767 from the Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program



Partners





BFW provides continuum of learning



- 8-week classroom program
- Mentorships/Internships/coaching groups provide learning in the field
- Advanced courses provide higher level content to class grads; help us offer continuing ed on relevant topics

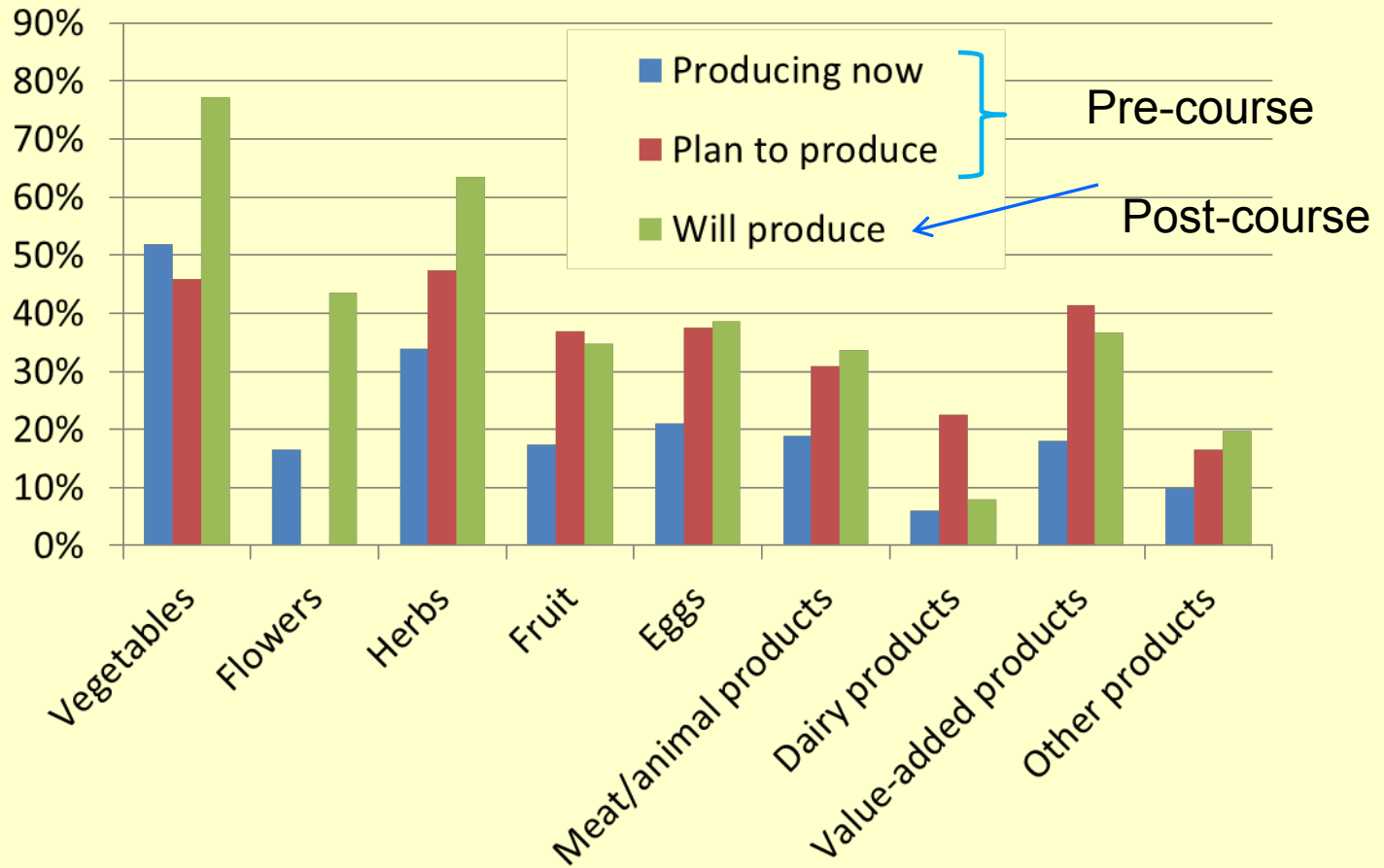


Key Values/Principles

- Core curriculum is universal in need
- Engaged communities create excellence
- Not just organic but all production types
- Content plus networking = success
- Coordinator sets the stage, provides context for participants, links classes & concepts
- Collaboration = success
- Farmers/ranchers as teachers



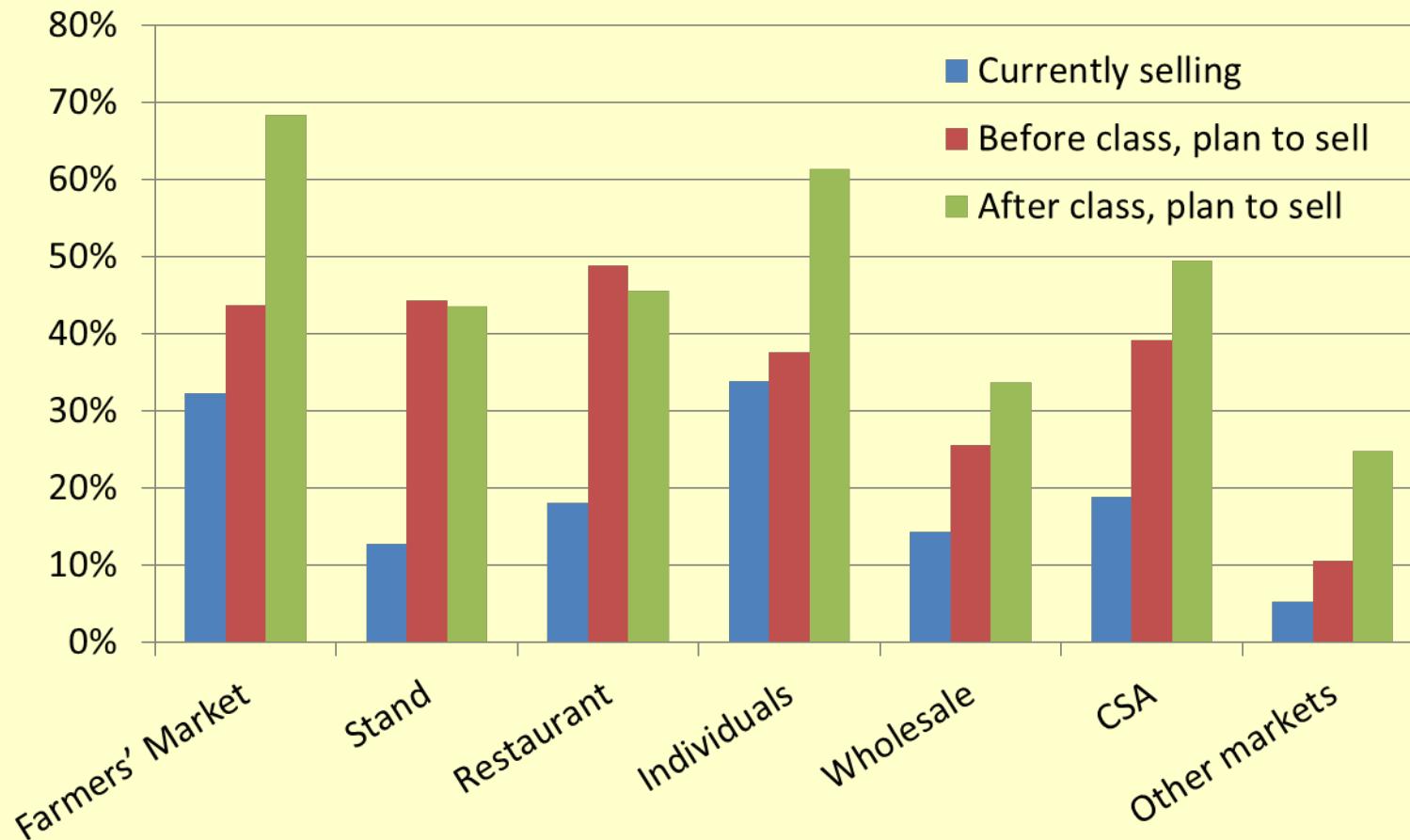
We educate on viable products



Source: Comparisons of years 1 & 2 pre- and post-course evaluations



And profitable markets



Source: Comparisons of years 1 & 2 pre- and post-course evaluations



Collaborative Model of Engagement



- **Campus, regional and field Extension**
 - ◆ **In Colorado**
- **Extended model to Western States**
 - ◆ **Allowed to customize based on place-based needs**
- **Local advisory committees**
- **Local, regional and state partners**



Key Element: Local Advisory Committee

- Takes core curriculum, enhances delivery and adds on additional content
- BFW intersects the marketplace, advisory committee buffers against missteps
- Farmers and ag professionals
- Face to face meetings essential
- Community Developed =
Community Building!



How we begin to create community

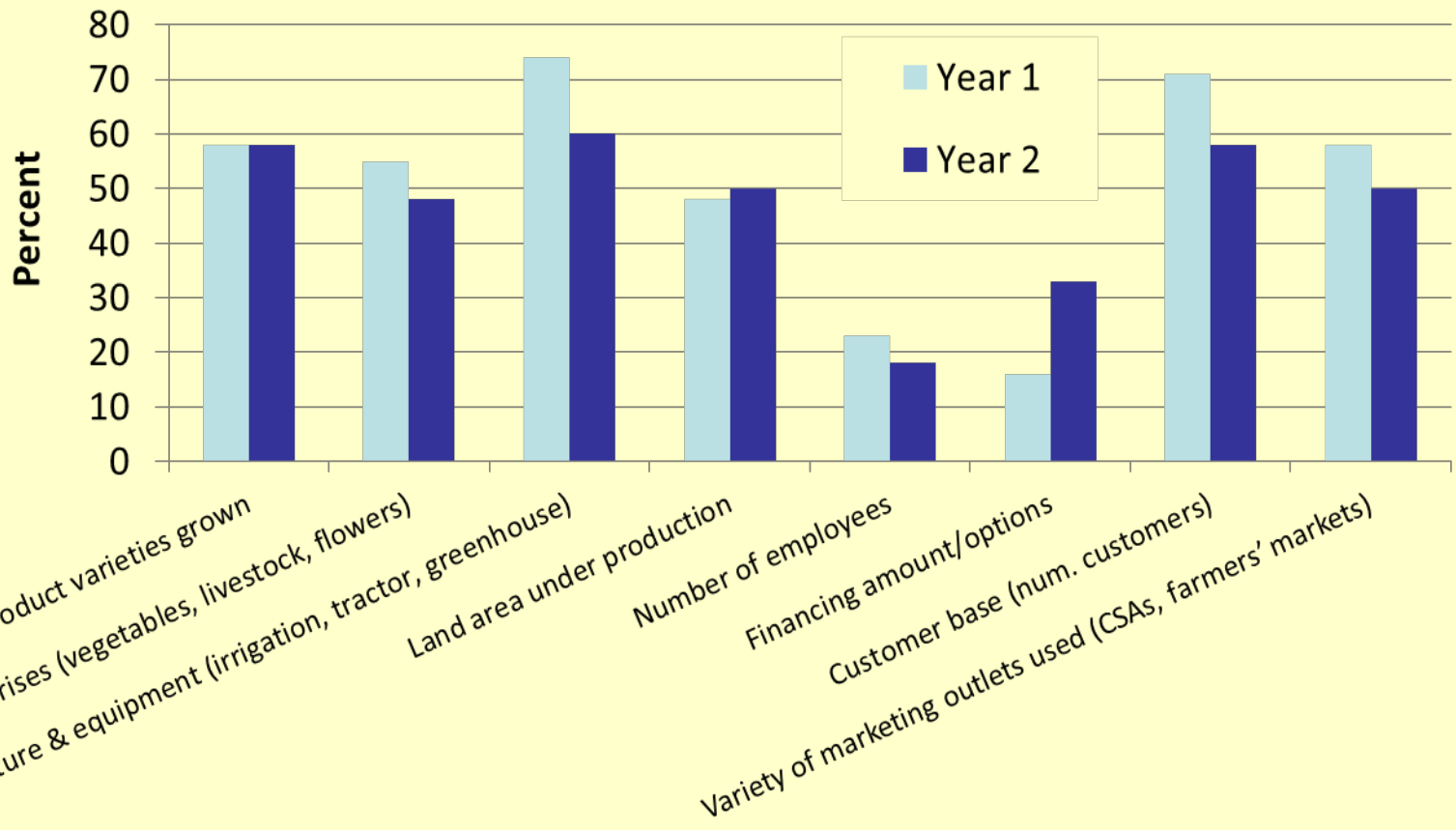


	Year 1	Year 2
I now have a network of farmers I can work with	79%	83%
I would recommend this course to other farmers or potential farmers	90%	100%
I increased my network of farming colleagues and can draw on them for information/resources	87%	90%

Source: Years 1 & 2 post-course evaluations



And influence business development



Source: Years 1 & 2 follow-up evaluations



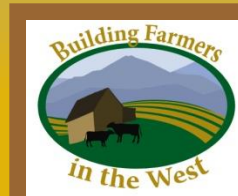
Using Building Farmers in the West to Fit Your Region and Stakeholders

**C. Wilson Gray, District Extension Economist
University of Idaho Twin Falls Research-Extension Center**

**WAEA Building Farmers
in the West Symposia
June 27-28, 2013**

The Advisory Committee

- *Farmers and Ag professionals*
 - *Carleen Herring Region IV Economic Development*
 - *Laura Sluder Owner of Blue Sage Farm*
 - *Diane Stevens Manager Twin Falls Farmers Market*
 - *Brian Daly Loan Officer with D L Evans Bank*
 - *Joel Packham Extension Educator Cassia County*
 - *Tianna Fife Extension Educator Twin Falls County*
 - *Christi Falen Extension Educator Lincoln County*
- *Reviewed core curriculum added additional content*
- *Face to face meetings to develop program, marketing, review of final business plans*
- *Local involvement aided local buy-in...*



Recruitment & publicity

Who is Building Farmers Designed For?

- If you want to start a market farm business
- If you have a market farm business and have farmed 10 years or less
- Desire to improve your business skills
- Would like to network with other market farm producers
- Produce an agricultural or value added AG product
- Market direct to consumers, to local

DOES ORGANIC FARMING SUIT YOUR SYSTEM?

- **SUCKLER COWS/SHEEP:** VERY DIFFICULT, CATTLE/GOATS, MANURE CONTROL, INTRODUCTION OF COWS ARE THE MAIN ISSUES
- **DAIRYING:** GOOD GRASSLAND MANAGEMENT & GOOD ANNUAL ROTATION ESSENTIAL
- **TILLAGES:** DEMANDING ENTERPRISE; PRICE IS SOLUTIONS NOT AVAILABLE; ADDITIONAL THINKING OF NITROGEN, SOIL NITROGEN & WEED CONTROL ARE CRITICAL
- **VEGETABLES:** GOOD MARKET DEMAND; FULL SCALE VEGETABLES REQUIRES A HIGH LEVEL OF EXPERIENCE
- **POULTRY:** COST POTENTIAL; NUTRITION, ROASTABILITY & ATTENTION TO DETAIL ARE CRITICAL

ORGANIC PRODUCE IS IDEALLY SUITED TO FARMERS MARKETS

2011 Idaho Building Farmers Program is brought to you by...

University of Idaho Extension



United States Department of Agriculture

National Institute of Food and Agriculture



This material is based upon work supported by USDA/NIFA under Award Number 2009-49400-05877.

University of Idaho Extension programs are available to all without discrimination



Do You Want To...

- ✓ Make more \$\$\$'s?
- ✓ Know more about your business?
- ✓ Add to your marketing skills?
- ✓ Network with other producers?
- ✓ Take your business to the next level?



The Idaho Building Farmers Workshop is for you!

Farmers Teaching Farmers

The Idaho Building Farmers program builds farm community and farmer capacity through classroom and experiential learning for beginning farmers (0 - 10 yrs exp). The Market Farm Track is a series of 8 evening classes designed to help New Farmers explore farming as a business and provide Intermediate and Experienced Farmers with tools and ideas to refine and enhance their business management, production, and marketing skills.

- The local food movement is growing in Idaho.
- Local farmers' markets are thriving and can provide an excellent inroad for new farmers.
- Take your operation to the next level – enhance your business and marketing skills.
- Learn from successful producers about what it takes to market locally.
- Make the most of your opportunities; explore more ways to add value to your products.
- Build your skills, take a new look at how you do business, develop business/marketing plans.
- Network with other growers in your area.



Program Lineup

Workshops will be each Tuesday, starting January 18

Dinner & networking
6:00 – 6:30 p.m.
Presentations & discussion
6:30 – 9:00 p.m.

Core topics - Business Planning and Goals; Market Analysis and Planning; Records and Financial Analysis

Elective topics – three to be determined by group interest – Agritourism; Income Taxes and Business Form; Food Safety; Value Added Products; Organic Production

Course wrap-up - Tues, Mar 1 and Tues, Mar 8 – Presentation of Class Participant Business Plans*

*Certificates of completion are awarded after presentation of business plan. Those with certificates of completion may apply to the mentorship program.

How to Register

Registration forms will be available online November 5 at:

<http://buildingfarmersinthewest.org>

or request at 208-736-3622

Registration must be received by Tuesday, December 7, 2010

Registrants will receive a notice of receipt.

First workshop held at Twin Falls County Extension Building 246 3rd Avenue East, Twin Falls

Questions?
208-736-3622

Cost

Registration Limited to 30

Building Farmers - \$100

for all 8 sessions per person, which includes meals and materials, call 208-736-3622 to be on our notification list.



Curriculum Development

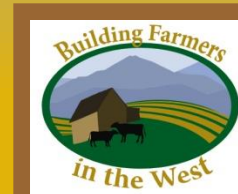
- 8 week course
 - ➔ Weeks 1-3 Business plans
 - Set by curriculum
 - ➔ Weeks 4-6 Group interest
 - Participants indicated topics at registration
 - ➔ Weeks 7-8 Presentation of business plans
 - Reviewed by group and advisory committee – comments returned to presenter.



Program & Speakers

Time	Topic	Who
6-6:30 pm	Dinner & Networking	Group
6:30-7 pm	Review last week	Gray/Fife/Packham
7-8:30 pm	Presentation & discussion	Speaker
8:30 - 9 pm	Next assignment	Gray/Fife/Packham

Week 1	Business Planning and Goal Setting	Gray
Week 2	Market Planning and Analysis	Packham
Week 3	Records and Financial Analysis	Fife
Week 4	Tax Management and Form of Business	Cooper-Norman CPA's
Week 5	Funding Sources Food Tech Center	Brent Jussel - Region IV development Jim Toomey, UI Food Tech Center
Week 6	Agritourism Market Innovations	Dawn Thilmany – CSU; Cheryl Bennett – Lava Lake Lamb
Week 7	Business Plan reviews	Group
Week 8	Business Plan reviews	Group



Getting to Know You

- Operation Variety
 - 3 Alpaca
 - 2 Yak
 - 1 Elk
 - 2 Goat
 - 1 meat, 1 dairy
 - 1 Children's Boutique
 - Several diversified vegetable
- Each week began with a “networking” dinner
 - Meals were catered by a local all natural café



Local Dish
MARKET & CAFE

- Several with common interests have remained in touch



Who attended

- 18 operations with 21 participants
 - ➔ 7 Operations & 9 participants were more distant for travel
 - ➔ A wide variety of operations were involved
- Connecting to a remote site
 - ➔ Idaho has a compressed video network
 - ➔ UI and the state High School system are compatible
 - A remote class site at Shoshone was setup



Who attended

	Percentage
New Farmer/Rancher	40.9%
Intermediate Farmer/Rancher	45.5%
Experienced Farmer/Rancher	13.6%

	Average	Min years	Max years
Number of years selling	1.9	0.0	5.0



What they learned

To what extent do you understand the following subjects? (scale of 1-5)	Pre-course	Post-course	Pt Chg	% Chg
Developing business plans	2.32	4.2	1.88	81.2%
Maintaining financial records & budgeting	3.36	4	0.64	18.9%
Using cost-effective production strategies	2.73	4	1.27	46.7%
Targeting viable customers for each product	2.50	4.1	1.60	64.0%
Using cost-effective promotional techniques	2.64	4	1.36	51.7%
Pricing products & implementing pricing strategies	2.68	3.7	1.02	38.0%
Using effective merchandising at direct markets	2.27	3.8	1.53	67.2%
Showcasing product variety & abundance at direct markets	2.36	3.8	1.44	60.8%
Assessing operation specific/applicable taxes	2.27	3.1	0.83	36.4%
Managing labor force & assessing seasonal labor requirements	2.27	3.5	1.23	54.0%
Complying with regulatory issues (food safety, zoning, etc.)	2.64	4	1.36	51.7%
Accessing local resources/technical support (agency, Extension, etc.)	2.32	3.8	1.48	63.9%



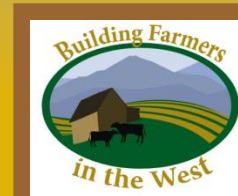
What they learned

	<u>Pre-</u> <u>course</u>	<u>Post-</u> <u>course</u>	<u>Pt Chg</u>	<u>% Chg</u>
Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements (scale of 1-5)	Average			
A business plan should be developed prior to implementing crop/livestock production	3.91	4.1	0.19	4.9%
I understand the risks and opportunities associated with direct marketing/targeted wholesale marketing	3.64	4.2	0.56	15.5%
I understand the application & financial requirements for participation in agency (FSA,NRCS, etc.) programs	2.59	3.7	1.11	42.8%
I have previous experience developing business plans/ I understand the process of developing a business plan.	2.77	4.7	1.93	69.5%
I currently have a business plan for my operation	2.00	4.1	2.10	105.0%
I follow a financial plan for my operation annually	1.82	3.9	2.08	114.5%
I follow a production plan for my operation annually	2.27	4.1	1.83	80.4%
I follow a marketing plan for my operation annually	2.32	3.9	1.58	68.2%



Where are they now?

Percentage	<u>Pre-course Assessment</u>			<u>Post-course Assessment</u>
	Producing	Plan to produce	Business plan	Will produce
Vegetables	40.9%	27.3%	4.5%	20%
Flowers	0.0%	18.2%	0.0%	10%
Herbs	4.5%	31.8%	4.5%	10%
Fruit	9.1%	31.8%	0.0%	30%
Eggs	31.8%	9.1%	0.0%	40%
Meat/animal products	54.5%	22.7%	0.0%	50%
Dairy products	4.5%	9.1%	0.0%	10%
Value-added products	27.3%	31.8%	0.0%	50%
Other:	27.3%	4.5%	0.0%	44%

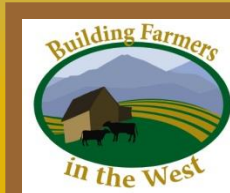


Where are they now?

	Pre-course Assessment		Post-course Assessment
	Currently selling	Plan to sell	Percentage
Farmers' Market	54.5%	13.6%	60%
Stand	13.6%	13.6%	20%
Restaurant	13.6%	13.6%	70%
Individuals	54.5%	0.0%	70%
Wholesale	13.6%	9.1%	50%
CSA	0.0%	4.5%	0%
Other:	13.6%	4.5%	40%

Where are they now?

Participant	What they did
Green Goat Farm	Interned with a local sheep dairy on milking and cheese making. Began marketing goat cheeses.
Angels of the Earth Farm	Built Hoop Houses for early/late vegetable and flower production
G A Bull Elk	Moved to a better location for elk ranch, game bird hunting and Agri-tourism
Simon Boers Chevron LLC	Continued to develop meat goat operation
Lost Shaker Alpacas	Expanding their fiber market



Where are they now?

- *4L Farms – Westendorf Family*
 - *Built a hoop house for raspberry production*
 - *Initiated transition planning to transfer the operation to the next generation*



Westendorf Observation

This video clip was not included due to space limitations.

In the 1:32 minute clip Mrs. Westendorf commented on how taking the BFW class led her to realize the necessity of keeping the next generations involved if her grandchildren were to be the 6th to farm.





Keeping Our Eye On the Ball...

Thank You



Evaluation Methods & Innovations in Experiential Learning

Colorado State University

Extension



Jo Ann Warner, Associate Director
Western Center for Risk Management Education
Washington State University



University of Idaho
Extension

Program Evaluation Committee:

Kynda Curtis – Utah State University

Martha Sullins – Colorado State University

Jo Ann Warner – Washington State University

Kelli Enns – Colorado State University

Dea Sloan – Colorado State University



United States
Department of
Agriculture

National Institute
of Food and
Agriculture



Key Element: Maintaining engagement through assessment ...



- Starts before students arrive in the classroom and continues through experiential learning
- Answers the questions:
 - ◆ What do we know about our participants?
 - ◆ Is our curriculum appropriate for our learners?
 - ◆ What knowledge, skills and attitudes were acquired?
 - ◆ Did our program enhance production and business goals?



Three Tiered Approach

- **Pre-Course Assessment (prior to or 1st day of course)**
 - ◆ Measures current knowledge, skills, experience, attitudes and learning goals.
- **Post-Course Assessment (final day of course)**
 - ◆ Measures changes in knowledge, skills and attitudes as a result of course participation; as well as intent to change practice.
- **Follow-Up Assessment (9 months to 1 year after course)**
 - ◆ Measures adoption of knowledge/skills, actual changes in practice and socio/economic impacts to their operations and communities.



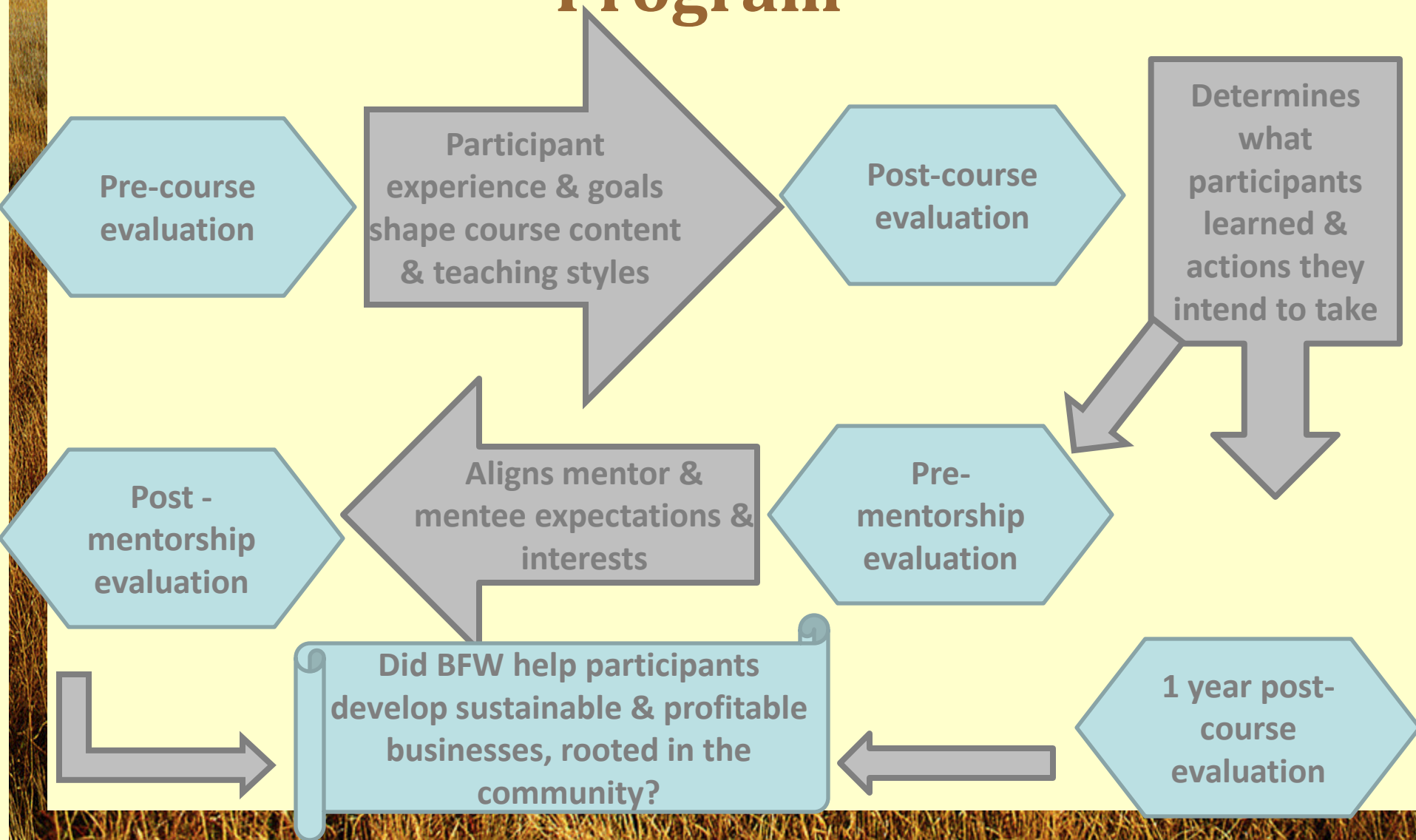
Importance and Purpose



- **Tracks participant progress**
 - ◆ **Short term goals – changes in Knowledge, skills and attitudes**
 - ◆ **Long term goals – changes in practice and economic and social impacts.**
- **Documents success stories**
- **Informs program content**
- **Demonstrates value and effectiveness of program**
- **Builds regional and statewide program capacity**
- **Strengthens stakeholder base**

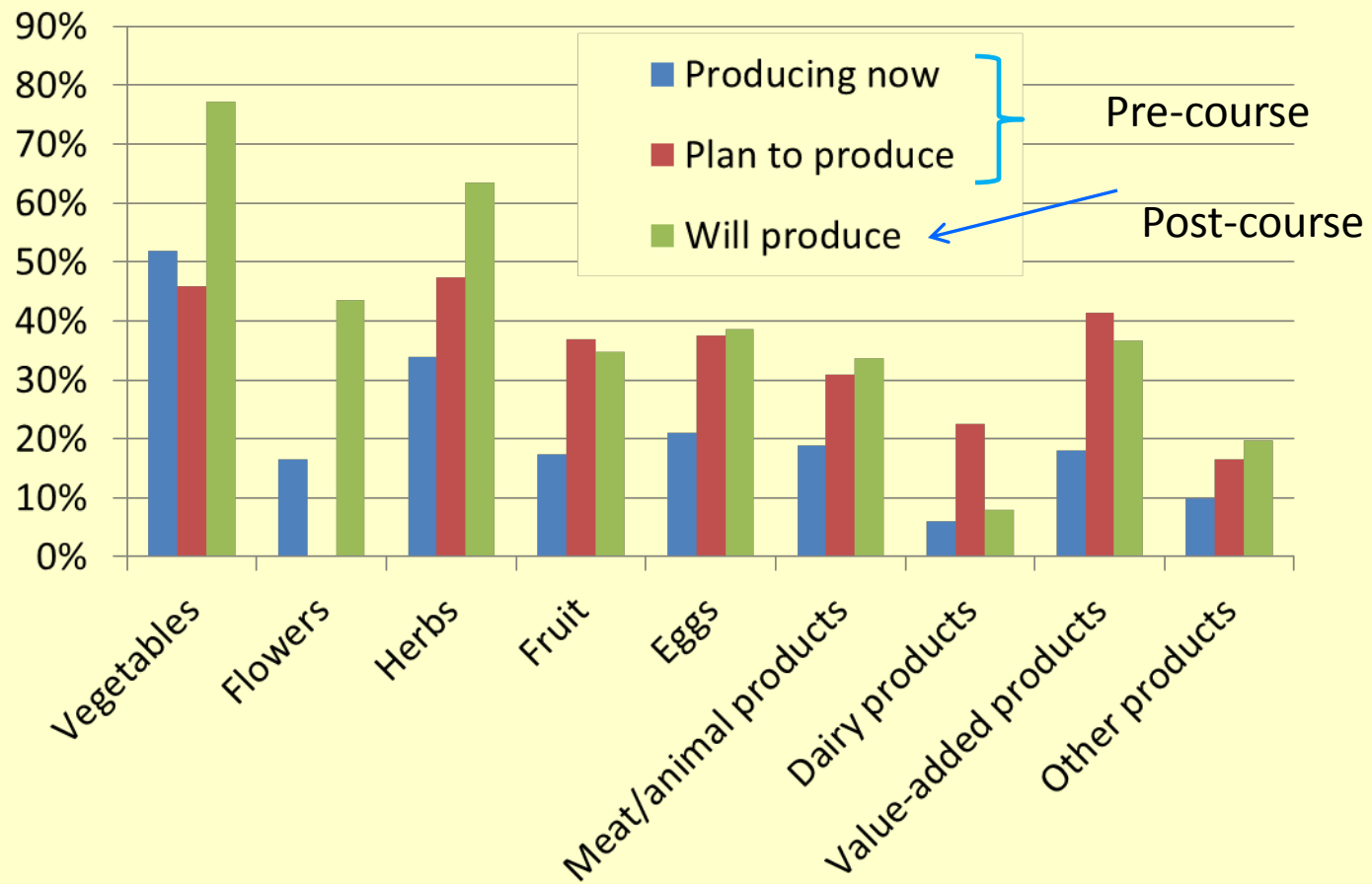


How evaluation shapes the Building Farmers Program





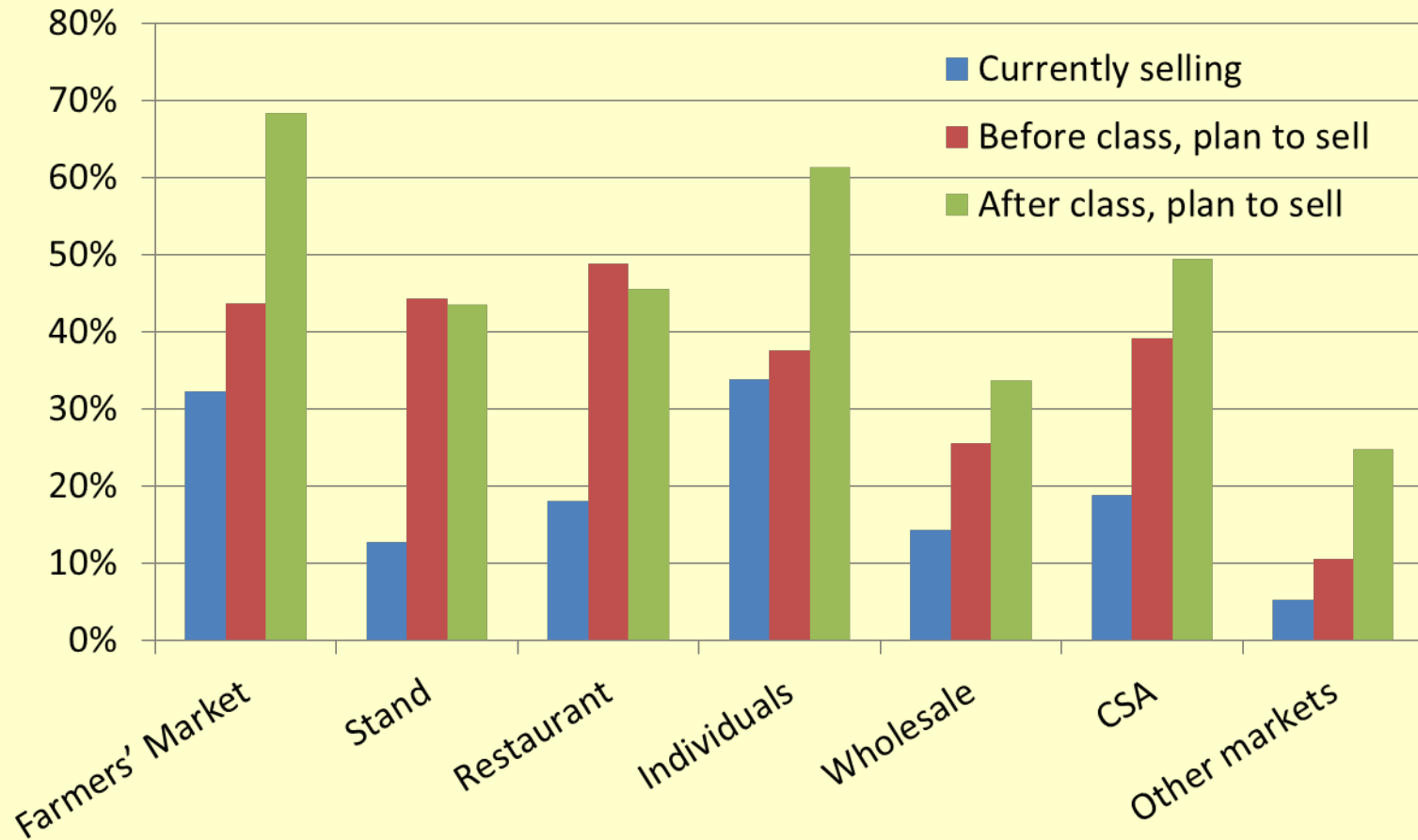
Items Under Production



Source: Comparisons of years 1 & 2 pre- and post-course evaluations



Marketing Outlets



Source: Comparisons of years 1 & 2 pre- and post-course evaluations



Knowledge/Skills Change as a Result of Classroom Participation



	Change in stated skills	
	Year 1	Year 2
Accessing local resources/technical support	61%	54%
Developing business plans	60%	41%
Using effective merchandising at direct markets	60%	50%
Assessing operation specific/applicable taxes	56%	62%
Showcasing product variety & abundance at direct markets	54%	52%
Using cost-effective promotional techniques	50%	41%

Source: Comparisons of years 1 & 2 pre- and post-course evaluations



Modifying/Improving Program Content



	% Change (Pre to Follow-up)	
	Year 1	Year 2
Maintaining financial records & budgeting	30%	17%
Managing labor force & assessing seasonal labor requirements	39%	38%
Using cost-effective production strategies	36%	32%
Complying with regulatory issues	48%	50%
Targeting viable customers for each product	38%	30%
Pricing products & implementing pricing strategies	42%	37%

Source: Comparisons of years 1 & 2 pre- and follow-up evaluations



How the classroom experience influences business and learning outcomes...

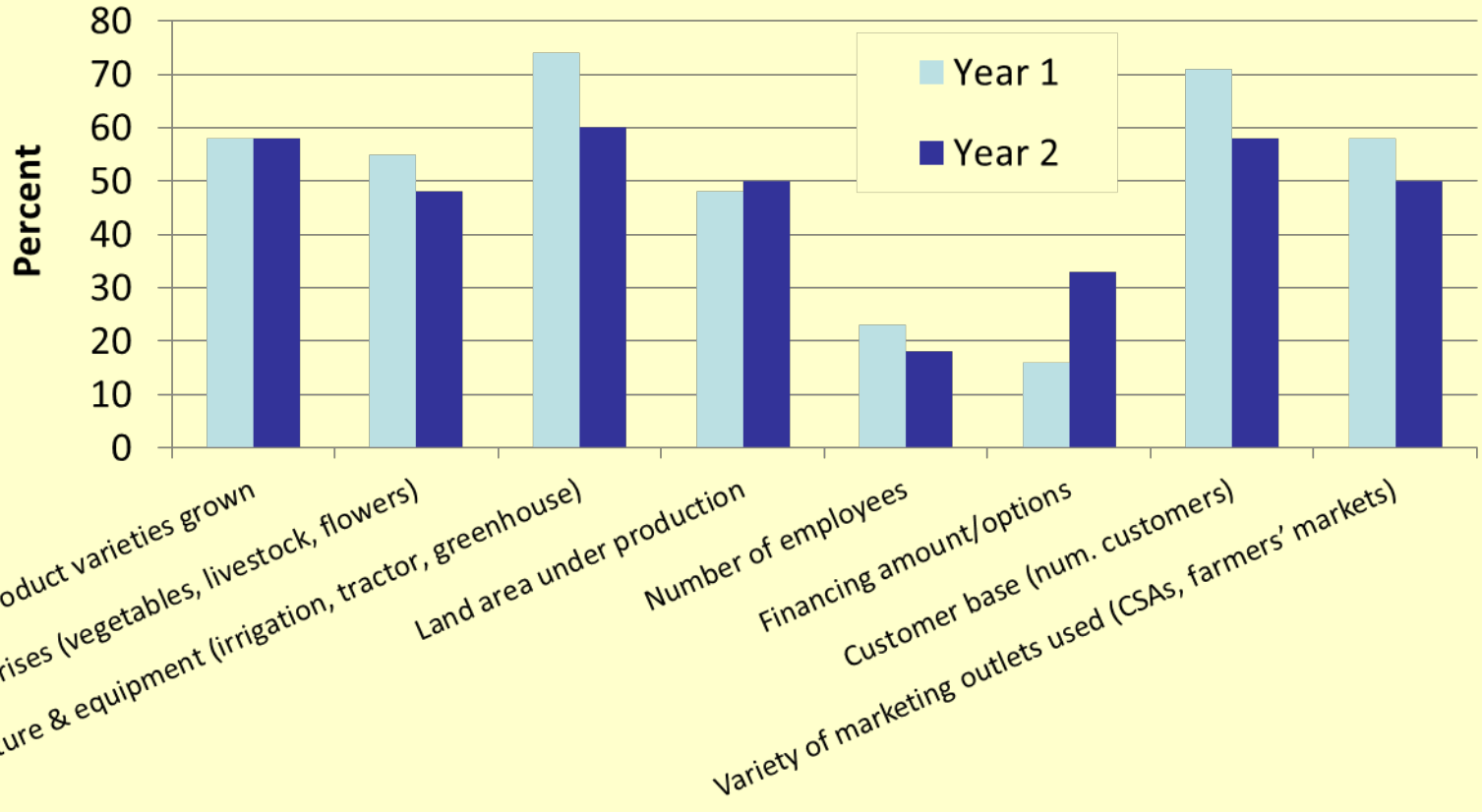


	Year 1	Year 2
If currently farming, I plan to continue farming or if not currently farming, I plan to initiate my farm enterprise	97%	95%
I completed a viable business plan	90%	90%
I will use at least 40% of the materials from this course in my farm enterprise	71%	83%
I will apply for a mentorship with an established farm operator.	23%	24%

Source: Years 1 & 2 follow-up evaluations



Influences business development...



Source: Years 1 & 2 follow-up evaluations



Shapes intended actions & attitudes



Attitude Statements – Year One

	Avg Pre-Course	Avg Post-Course	Percentage Change (Pre to Post)
A business plan should be developed prior to implementing crop/livestock production	4.32	4.56	6%
I understand the risks and opportunities associated with direct marketing/targeted wholesale marketing	3.44	4.28	25%
I understand the application & financial requirements for participation in agency (FSA, NRCS, etc.) programs	2.57	3.82	48%
I have previous experience developing business plans/ I understand the process of developing a business plan	2.82	4.54	61%
I currently have a business plan for my operation	2.28	4.05	78%
I follow a financial plan for my operation annually	2.27	4.30	89%
I follow a production plan for my operation annually	2.60	4.43	70%
I follow a marketing plan for my operation annually	2.38	4.39	85%



Shapes intended actions & attitudes...



Attitude Statements – Year Two

	Avg Pre-Course	Avg Post-Course	Percentage Change (Pre to Post)
A business plan should be developed prior to implementing crop/livestock production	4.50	4.72	5%
I understand the risks and opportunities associated with direct marketing/targeted wholesale marketing	3.66	4.43	21%
I understand the application & financial requirements for participation in agency (FSA, NRCS, etc.) programs	2.83	3.77	33%
I have previous experience developing business plans/ I understand the process of developing a business plan	3.26	4.70	44%
I currently have a business plan for my operation	2.85	4.23	49%
I follow a financial plan for my operation annually	2.73	4.42	62%
I follow a production plan for my operation annually	3.10	4.56	47%
I follow a marketing plan for my operation annually	2.82	4.46	58%



Builds community capacity...



	Year 1	Year 2
I now have a network of farmers I can work with	87%	83%
I would recommend this course to other farmers or potential farmers	87%	100%
I increased my network of farming colleagues and can draw on them for information/resources	84%	90%

Source: Years 1 & 2 follow-up evaluations



And sustains economic & social impacts for participants



	Year 1	Year 2
Farming operation more economically viable	49%	55%
Quality of life on my farm has improved	68%	48%
Farming operations more efficient	65%	53%
Family's goals now easier to achieve	58%	65%
Employee/employer relations on my farm have improved	39%	38%
Value of attending this course was more than the cost of attendance (time, travel costs, etc.)	86%	85%
Building Farmers program improved our farming community	66%	85%

Source: Years 1 & 2 follow-up evaluations



Experiential Learning – Mentorship Program



- **Field-based instruction**
- **Guided by producer-mentors**
- **Professional Development Goals**
 - ◆ **Met through completion of professional development plans (best mentor/mentee match)**
- **Post-experience assessments and follow-up interviews conducted with mentors/mentees.**



Themes and Findings

Mentees:

- Access to higher level learning
 - ◆ Production issues and techniques
 - ◆ Introduction to new resources
- Mentors:
 - ◆ Good learning experience
 - ◆ Mutually beneficial exchange



Themes and Findings

Challenges:

- **Mentor availability**
- **Mentee preparedness**
- **Accommodating individual interests of participants**
- **Improved Mentor training resources and support**
- **Competitive tension**



Themes and Findings

Strengths:

- Knowledge transfer in informal environment
- Relevant topics
- High caliber professional support
- “Hands-on” on farm engagement – moving from the theoretical to the practical.
- Secondary benefits in community development.



What They Said....

- “This program was exactly what I needed in order to develop a small scale agribusiness”
- The BFW course “saved [*one participant*] from jumping into a position that she would’ve regretted.”
- “Determining the economic thresholds for tasks such as weeding allows for clearer decision making....”
- “Our operation...fosters community, generates an awareness of where food comes from and promotes health for people in our neighborhood and beyond.”



Thank You!

