

**AN EVALUATION OF THE SMALL FARMER OUTREACH  
TRAINING AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM FOR  
FARMERS OF COLOR IN TEXAS**

A Dissertation

by

NELSON T. DANIELS

Submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies of  
Texas A&M University  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

August 2005

Major Subject: Agricultural Education

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**ABSTRACT**

An Evaluation of the Small Farmer Outreach  
Training and Technical Assistance Program for  
Farmers of Color in Texas.

(August 2005)

Nelson T. Daniels, B.S., Prairie View A&M University;

M.Ed., Prairie View A&M University

Chair of Advisory Committee: Dr. Alvin Larke, Jr.

The purpose of this study was to examine the effectiveness of the small farmer outreach training and technical assistance programs as related to farmers of color. The items to be evaluated included financial considerations, educational effectiveness, access and acquisition of farm loans, participation in Extension sponsored events and involvement in community activities.

The sample population for this study was small scale agricultural producers representing two ethnic groups, African Americans and Hispanics, located in Cameron, Hidalgo, Starr and Willacy counties and enrolled in the Small Farmer Outreach Training and Technical Assistance Program (N=68) between October 1, 2001, and September 30, 2004.

Descriptive statistics were used for reporting personal characteristics of the participants, as well as to determine knowledge gained and effectiveness of the Small Farmer Outreach Training and Technical Assistance Program.

Statistical Package for the Social Sciences® (SPSS) was used to calculate frequencies, percentages and variability of the variables.

The major findings of the study were as follows:

1. The Small Farmer Outreach Training and Technical Assistance Program is an effective educational program in teaching farm management techniques and assisting with the acquisition of financial resources.
2. Farm size was relatively small with over half of the farms being fewer than 50 acres.
3. The ethnic identity of participants was more likely to be Hispanic than African American.
4. Total household income for a majority of the participants was less than \$50,000.
5. The majority of the participants were part-time farmers.
6. The majority of the participants had a farm plan.
7. A majority of the participants had at least a high school education.
8. Program participants were likely to be approved for a loan through the United States Department of Agriculture.

## **DEDICATION**

This dissertation is dedicated to my parents. First, thanks to my mother, Mrs. Mae Belle Daniels, who taught me to believe in myself and to follow my dreams. Thanks for always being there for me. Thanks for your love, kindness and support. Also, thanks for your prayers when I did not know how to pray for myself. Secondly, thanks to my father, the late William Daniels, Sr., for teaching me the meaning of sacrifice. Thanks for instilling in me the ethics of work and the importance of an education. To both of you, thanks for teaching me that a man's destination is not bound by his beginnings.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I thank my Lord and Savior for allowing me this opportunity in life. It is just another example of his kindness and mercy.

Second only to my God, I would like to thank my family for helping me to reach this milestone. I realize that I could not have accomplished this without your love, support and especially your prayers. Thanks for all of your sacrifices, especially for the time lost in companionship and in fatherhood. Thanks to my siblings for all of the things that you have and continue to do. Most of all, thanks for love, laughter, and especially your encouragement.

I am grateful for my committee for supporting me when it would have been easier to focus my attention else where. To my committee chair, Dr. Alvin Larke, Jr., I want to say thanks for not giving up on me. To Drs. Chanda D. Elbert, Christine D. Townsend and Patricia J. Larke, thanks for guidance throughout the entire process. I cannot express how appreciative I am of your kind and encouraging words.

I would also like to express a special thanks to Dr. Scott Cummings for your assistance in helping me analyze the data that was collected. Likewise, I want to thank Dr. Wash Jones for your time, effort and expertise in proof reading my materials.

To my Cooperative Extension Program family, I want to say thanks for your support. Thanks for pitching in when I needed to be away. Also, thanks for the words of support when I needed them most. A special thanks to Dr. Linda

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### Background of the Study

The future of agriculture in this country may depend on the renewal of the small farm (Scheneman, 1985). Operators of small family farms are finding it increasingly harder to survive although nearly 40% of the value of farm products produced in the United States is still generated by small farms. In 1999, small farms grossing less than \$10,000 made up 54.5% of all farms in the United States and according to the 2002 U.S. Census of Agriculture, 39% of farms had sales of less than \$2,500.

Because of recent legal actions taken by farmers of color against the United States Department of Agriculture, America is becoming increasingly aware of the plight of small farmers. Several groups of limited resource individuals alleged that the United States Department of Agriculture's program delivery system discriminated against farmers of color and women farmers and contributed to the loss of land owned by these groups. In 1997, a number of African American farmers consolidated their claims of racial discrimination in farm lending and benefits programs into one class action suit against the United States Department of Agriculture. This class action suit, *Pigford v. Glickman*, is commonly referred to as the Black Farmer Lawsuit (U.S. General Accounting

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This dissertation follows the style and format of the *Journal of Agricultural Education*.

Office, 1999). This case was settled on April 14, 1999. African American Farmers who could prove discrimination received \$50,000. Following the settlement in the Black Farmer Lawsuit, three additional cases were filed. Hispanic farmers filed a law suit (*Garcia v. Veneman*) in 2000. This case alleged discrimination in lending practices against Hispanic farmers by the United States Department of Agriculture (Hilliard, 2002). This case is commonly referred to as the Garcia case and actions are still pending. Similar allegations were brought forth in *Keepseagle v. Veneman* filed on behalf of Native American Farmers and *Love v. Veneman* filed on behalf of women farmers. Class certification was granted in the *Keepseagle* case but was not granted in the *Love* and *Garcia* cases (United States District Courts, 2004).

In 1969, African Americans owned six million acres of farm land, but were losing land at an annual rate of over 300,000 acres (Pennick & Gray, 2000). The Commission on Civil Rights projected that Black owned farms would cease to exist by the year 2000 if nothing was done to reverse the trend (United States Commission on Civil Rights, 1982).

Some of the reasons for African American land loss are that they often had limited access to information that would have enabled them to protect their land from tax, credit, inheritance, and other laws affecting landholdings. Also, because of the social and economic position of African Americans in the South, these farmers could not acquire sufficient amounts of land to take advantage of cost saving innovations in agricultural production (Effland, Hoppe, and Cook,

1998).

The Federation of Southern Cooperatives' Land Assistance Fund identified seven common causes of African American land loss. They were heir property ownership, lack of estate planning, tax sales, partition sales, voluntary sales, land exploitation, and the inaccessibility to legal counsel (Thomas, Pennick, & Gray, 2004).

In 1982, the United States Commission on Civil Rights published a report stating that the primary reason African Americans lost land was because of the United States Department of Agriculture. The 1982 report confirmed that assistance provided by the United States Department of Agriculture throughout the country had often been denied to farmers of color resulting in tragic consequences for family farmers and their communities (Pennick & Gray, 2000).

This injustice was rectified partially by the passage of the Minority Farmer Rights Act entitled the "Outreach and Technical Assistance Program for Socially Disadvantaged Farmers and Ranchers," which was incorporated into the 1990 Farm Bill. The Minority Farmers Rights Act was only partially effective. While it provided for farmers of color to get financial and technical assistance, it did not eliminate USDA employees from discrimination these farmers. This is obvious from the allegations that were brought forward in the various lawsuits by farmers of color some seven years later.

Title XXV, Section 2501 of the Food, Agriculture, Conservation, and Trade Act of 1990 charged the Farm Service Agency (FSA) with the

implementation of the Outreach and Assistance Grants for Socially Disadvantaged Farmers and Ranchers Program. Using this authority, FSA would enter into agreements with 1890 and 1862 Land Grant Institutions, 1994 Native American Tribal Colleges, Hispanic Serving Institutions and community based organizations to reverse the decline of socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers across the nation through training and technical assistance.

With the passage and implementation of this legislation, these institutions and organizations have been able to implement a comprehensive, technical assistance program to help farmers develop a holistic approach to farming that helps make farming more profitable and improves the quality of life for entire communities. The FSA entered into cooperative agreements with Land Grant Institutions to provide intensive training in production and financial management to farmers of color and small farmers and ranchers in selected states. According to the terms of the agreement, each award recipient would hire farm specialists to provide one-on-one and group farm management training. These farm specialists would visit program participants three times a month to provide individualized training in custom farm plans, production and marketing practices, and record keeping. Overall, the objectives of the program are to enhance the ability of minority and small farmers and ranchers to operate farming or ranching enterprises independently, and produce income adequate to service debt, maintain farm operations and provide a reasonable life style. These outreach efforts have made a considerable and positive impact on the survival of farmers

of color, and this project has been successful in fulfilling its mandate of providing services to small and limited resource farmers.

The U.S. Census of Agriculture recognizes four major ethnic groups which represent farmers of color. These ethnic groups are African Americans, Native Americans, Asians and Pacific Islanders, and those with either a Hispanic or Latino background. The number of farmers who claimed a Hispanic or Latino background rose 32% from 20,956 in 1992 to 27,717 in 1997. Growth in Hispanic or Latino farmers and Asian farmers is consistent with growth of these racial and ethnic groups in the U.S. population (National Agricultural Statistics Service, 1997).

The number of African American operated farms, unlike farms of most other racial minority groups, declined slightly from 18,816 in 1992 to 18,451 in 1997 (National Agricultural Statistic Service, 1997). This trend may continue since African American farmers on average are older than farmers of other racial groups. Only 4% of Black farmers are under 35 years of age, while nearly a quarter of them are at least 70 years old (Economic Research Service, 1999).

Farmers of color tend to be regionally clustered, often the result of historical factors. Hispanic or Latino farmers tend to be located in the Southwest, Native Americans in the Plains, and African American farmers along the Southern Coastal Plains, parts of the Piedmont, and the Mississippi River delta. Asian farmers are found primarily in California. Racial and ethnic minority farmers tend to operate smaller operations than non-minority farmers. Only



about a third of minority farms reported sales greater than \$10,000 in 1997, compared with half for all farms. However, some minority-operated farms are large, bringing the average sale to just under \$103,000, the average for all farms. Farms operated by African Americans, however, had average sales of \$26,000, while farms operated by Asian and Pacific Islanders had sales averaging \$209,000. A high proportion of Asians and Pacific Islanders operate farms producing high-value fruit, vegetable, or greenhouse crops, whereas over half of African American farmers have small beef cattle operations (National Agricultural Statistics Service, 2001).

### **Statement of the Problem**

This dissertation is an evaluative study of the Small Farmer Outreach Training and Technical Program which is a federally funded educational outreach program conducted by the Cooperative Extension Program at Prairie View A&M University. This program is designed to assist farmers of color to overcome some of the agricultural related problems which they face. These problems include limited access to government programs, technical assistance and financial assistance.

Both federal and state dollars continue to decrease, and competition for these funds by agencies and organizations continues to increase. These factors make it imperative that Extension programs, especially those supported by grant money, be evaluated to show accountability. Programs such as the Small

Farmer Outreach Training and Technical Assistance Programs must use evaluations to document their effectiveness and to insure optimal utilization of the massive financial investments made by the United States Department of Agriculture and other granting agencies.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study is to examine the effectiveness of the small farmer outreach training and technical assistance programs as it relates to farmers of color. The results of this study will provide the Cooperative Extension Program and the United States Department of Agriculture with information on the impact of this program as it relates to farmers of color. The information gained will identify changes required to improve the programs outreach, content and methodology.

The Cooperative Extension Program at Prairie View A&M University needs to know the effectiveness of the Small Farmer Outreach Training and Technical Assistance Program in Texas. The organization needs to know the changes in financial status and social capital of farmers of color as a result of participating in this program. Also, the organization needs to know what strategies, approaches and technologies are crucial for the continuation of the program.

The items to be evaluated include financial considerations, educational effectiveness, leadership and access to other resources. Some of the factors

include the acquisition of farms, the size of the farms, the acquisition of loans, the level of involvement in community activities, successes, failures, and future plans.

### **Research Questions**

What are the demographic characteristics of the farmers in terms of age, gender, marital status, ethnicity and level of education?

1. What are the characteristics of participants in the small farmer outreach training and technical assistance program as related to farm operations and record keeping?
2. What are the changes in community activities as a result of participating in the small farmer outreach training and technical assistance program?
3. What are the changes in the farming operation in terms of financial assistance, technical assistance, the process of obtaining a loan and the success rate in the acquisition of farm loans as a result of participation in the small farmer outreach training and technical assistance program?

### **Significance of the Study**

A need to improve our understanding of factors that influence the decision making process of small and limited resource farmers still exists. Also a need

exists to understand better the processes that influence participation in outreach programs offered by both the Cooperative Extension Program and the United States Department of Agriculture. The similarities and differences between the different ethnic groups, income levels and literacy levels in the population demand attention. Innovative techniques for reaching diverse population groups and rural areas will need to be created (Anderson, 1994).

This study will benefit the Cooperative Extension Program by providing it with program impacts of the Small Farmer Outreach Training & Technical Assistance Project. Also, the evaluation findings will provide justification to the stakeholders that the program effectively and efficiently produced the intended results. Lastly, program participants will benefit from this study by being provided with better quality and more in-depth training experiences.

### **Operational Definitions**

African American – generally used to describe native citizens of the United States who are of African descent

Cooperative Extension Program – the educational outreach unit located at Prairie View A&M University; program funded by the United States Department of Agriculture and designed to deliver research-based information and informal educational opportunities focused on identified issues and needs to Texans of diverse ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds giving primary emphasis to individuals with limited resources

1862 Land-Grant University – Land-Grant Institution established by the passage of the First Morrill Act in 1862; these institutions were established to provide a broad segment of the population with a practical education that had direct relevance to their daily lives

1890 Land-Grant University – one of the 18 traditionally African-American institutions of higher learning located primarily in the South; these institutions' land-grant mission was defined by legislation in the second Morrill Act in 1890; in Texas, Prairie View A&M University is the 1890 land-grant university

European American – generally used to describe native citizens of the United States who are of European descent

Farm – any establishment that produces and sells (or normally would have sold) at least \$1,000 worth of agricultural commodities within a given calendar year

Farmer of Color – farmers whose heritage is other than European American. For the purpose of this study, the term implies individuals of African American and/or Hispanic heritage

Farm Operator – A person who operates a farm, either doing the work or making daily decisions about such things as planting, harvesting, feeding, and marketing; the operator may be the owner, a member of the owner's household, a hired manager, a tenant, a renter, or a sharecropper.

Farm Service Agency – the United States Department of Agriculture agency with the mission to help farmers conserve land and water resources,

provide credit to new or disadvantaged farmers and ranchers, and help farm operations recover from the effects of disaster

Food, Agriculture, Conservation, and Trade Act of 1990 – a five-year farm bill signed November 28, 1990, also referred to as the 1990 Farm Bill or Act

Hispanic – term used by the U.S. Census to describe individuals of Spanish, Latin American, or Spanish American-Indian heritage; the author realizes that this term does not accurately reflect all of the individuals in this study and that some prefer the term Latino, Latina, Spanish or other specific designations such as Mexican American or Cuban American

Limited Resource Individuals – persons limited in income, education or access to available resources and information

National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) – agency which administers the United States Department of Agriculture’s program for collecting and publishing timely national and state agricultural statistics

Native American – generally used to describe native citizens of the United States who are of North American descent

1994 Native American Tribal Colleges – Institutions which received land-grant status in 1994 as a provision in the Elementary and Secondary Education Reauthorization Act, titled The Equity in Education Land-Grant Status Act of 1994

Socially Disadvantaged Group - a group whose members have been subjected to racial or ethnic prejudice because of their identity as members of a

group without regard to their individual qualities (i.e., females, African Americans, American Indians, Asian or Pacific Islanders, and operators of Spanish origin) (Food, Agriculture, Conservation, and Trade Act, 1990)

Socially Disadvantaged Farmer or Rancher - A farmer or rancher who is a member of a socially disadvantaged group (Food, Agriculture, Conservation, and Trade Act, 1990).

### **Theoretical Base for the Study**

The theoretical base for this study was derived from a review of related literature addressing issues facing farmers of color. Increasing interest in the evaluation of public programs has shown that programs targeting specific groups have been effective (Blank, 1997). Therefore, this theory was used to create the primary focus of the study and evaluate the effectiveness of the small farmer outreach training and technical assistance program in Texas.

Research has shown that educational programs that are culturally relevant can help learners to face oppression and take control of their lives (Guy, 1999). The identification of a targeted population is one of the prerequisites to the design and operation of an effective program (Freeman, Rossi, & Lipsey, 1999). Therefore, evidence supports the theory that educational outreach programs designed for non-traditional groups result in positive changes for the targeted audience.

### **Assumptions**

1. Extension Staff administering the survey will explain the purpose to the participants.
2. Individuals completing the survey will respond objectively and honestly to questions posed on the survey instruments used in this study.
3. The instrumentation used in this study will accurately measure the effectiveness of the Small Farmer Outreach Training and Technical Assistance Program.
4. Individuals completing the survey are representative of the targeted population.

### **Limitations**

This study will measure the effectiveness of the Small Farmer Outreach Training and Technical Assistance Program in four Texas counties: Hidalgo, Starr, Willacy and Cameron.

1. The population for the study will be limited to African-American and Hispanic Americans who participated in the Small Farmer Outreach Training and Technical Assistance Program between October 1, 2001, and September 30, 2004.
2. Findings for this study may not be generalized to any group other than African-Americans and Hispanics enrolled in the program in the four designated Texas counties of Hidalgo, Starr, Willacy and Cameron.



### **Delimitations**

This study was delimited to 68 individuals participating in the Small Farmer Outreach Training and Technical Assistance Program in four Texas counties: Cameron, Hidalgo, Starr and Willacy.

### **Organization of the Remainder of the Dissertation**

Chapter II includes a review of the literature pertaining to (1) the history of the land-grant education system; (2) Farm Service Agency Loan Programs; (3) Discrimination in Programs Conducted by USDA; (4) the small farmer outreach training and technical assistance program; and (5) a description of model educational programs for non-traditional audiences.

Chapter III outlines the methods and procedures used to conduct the study. Chapter IV provides results of the analysis of data and a discussion of the results and findings. Chapter V contains the summary, conclusions, implications and recommendations of the study.

## **CHAPTER II**

### **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

This study evaluated the differences that existed among farmers of color who participated in the Small Farmer Outreach Training and Technical Assistance Program in Texas. The researcher examined financial and behavior changes of individuals, in four Texas counties, who participated in the outreach and education program between October 1, 2001 and September 30, 2004. The review of literature contains findings from books, dissertations, journals, government documents and computerized indexes.

The literature providing a theoretical framework for this study is subdivided into five major categories: (1) the history of the land-grant education system; (2) Farm Service Agency Loan Programs; (3) Discrimination in Programs Conducted by USDA; (4) the small farmer outreach training and technical assistance program; and (5) a description of model educational programs for non-traditional audiences.

Category 1 investigates literature which outlines the components of the land-grant education system. Category 2 discusses loan programs that are available to farmers through the Farm Service Agency. Category 3 focuses on discriminatory actions that have taken place in programs that are conducted by USDA. Category 4 explains the origin and outreach efforts of the small farmer outreach training and technical assistance program. Category 5 investigates literature describing model educational programs for non-traditional audiences.

## **History of the Land-Grant Education System**

The first and second Morrill Acts established the nation's land grant colleges and universities. The Morrill Act of 1862 established the National Land-Grant system. This act created agricultural colleges in each of the states through the donation of public lands.

The Morrill Act of 1862 provided for  
...the endowment, support, and maintenance of at least one college where the leading objective shall be, without excluding other scientific and classical studies, and including military tactics, to teach such branches of learning as are related to agriculture and the mechanic arts, in such manner as the legislature of the states may respectively prescribe, in order to promote the liberal and practical education of the industrial classes in the several pursuits and professions in life (National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges [NASULGC], 1995, p.6).

The intent of this legislation was to “offer those belonging to the industrial classes preparation for the professions of life” (NASULGC, 1995, p.6).

Educational institutions established by the Morrill Act of 1862 often are referred to as 1862 universities. They were created to service the agricultural and mechanics needs of America. Unfortunately, African Americans were excluded from receiving training at these institutions (Demissie, 1990).

In 1890, a second Morrill Act was passed by Congress. This act served

to “strengthen and expand the provisions of the first Morrill Act” (Mayberry, 1989, p. 45). The second Morrill Act ensured the availability of agricultural education for African Americans.

Additional legislation played a key role in the development of the land-grant system including the Bankhead-Jones Act of 1935. This act provided support for the establishment of land-grant colleges in Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands and Guam. In 1994, the Elementary and Secondary Reauthorization Act made the 29 Native American Tribal Colleges part of the land-grant system. This legislation also provided that the 1862 land-grant institutions collaborate with the tribal colleges in designing and developing Cooperative Extension programs focused on the agricultural education needs of Native Americans (NASULGC, 1995).

### **Agricultural Experiment Stations**

In 1887, the Hatch Act was approved by the U.S. Congress. This act established an agricultural experiment station at each of the land grant colleges. The Hatch Act established agricultural research as a recognized function of the land grant colleges. This act provided for a yearly grant to each state for support of an agricultural experiment station. These experiment stations were developed to conduct research in the basic, applied, and social sciences to produce information and technological developments which were designed to help improve the social and economic conditions of the people living in those

states.

### **Cooperative Extension**

Cooperative Extension officially began with the passage of the Smith-Lever Act of 1914. This act authorized the establishment of a system of extension services to diffuse practical information relative to agriculture, home economics and rural subjects (Smith, 1992). The Smith-Lever Act stated that:

...cooperative agricultural extension work shall consist of the development of practical applications of research knowledge and giving of instructions and practical demonstration of existing or improved practices or technologies in agriculture, home economics, and rural energy, and subjects related thereto to persons not attending or resident in said colleges in the several communities, and imparting information on said subjects through demonstrations, publications, and otherwise (NASULGC, 1995, p. 27).

The Smith-Lever Act created a partnership between the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the land-grant institutions. These institutions were authorized by the Morrill Land-Grant Acts of 1862 and 1890. Cooperative Extension is administered by the Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service (CSREES) (Seevers, Graham, Gamon, & Conklin, 1997). Additional legislation in the various states has enabled local governments in the counties to become a third legal partner in this education endeavor (Rasmussen, 1989). In

addition to this tripartite funding through federal, state and local funds, Cooperative Extension work is often supported by public and private grants and fee-for-service arrangements (Kellogg Commission, 1999).

The Cooperative Extension System creates and delivers educational programs in local communities throughout the country. It is a complex, nationwide, educational system that provides a structure for carrying out many of the practices of non-formal and continuing education for adults and youths in local communities (Applebee, 2000). The Cooperative Extension System links the educational and research resources and activities of 74 land-grant colleges and universities, 3,150 counties, and the United States Department of Agriculture through the Cooperative State Research Education and Extension Service (CSREES). Extension includes approximately 32,000 employees and 2.8 million volunteers in fulfilling its educational mission (Extension Committee on Policy, 1995).

The Cooperative Extension System helps people improve their lives through an educational process which uses scientific knowledge focused on their individual issues and needs. Drawing on research-based knowledge, Extension teaches people to identify problems, to analyze information, to decide among alternative courses of action for dealing with those problems, and to locate the resources to accomplish a preferred course of action.

Extension education generally occurs through one-on-one consultations with the individual farmer, and through the dissemination of publications.

Extension education also can take the form of workshops, informal group discussions, conferences, and demonstrations (Mosher, 1978). More recently, Extension outreach and education has made greater use of the mass media and/or distance education technology.

Although Cooperative Extension officially began in 1914, Extension-type outreach efforts were occurring long before with much of the work being done at institutions for African-Americans. In fact, the 1890 institutions were engaged in agricultural extension and outreach work for several decades prior to the enactment of the Smith-Lever Act of 1914 (Mayberry, 1989). Booker T. Washington began formal and informal educational outreach activities when he arrived at Tuskegee Institute in 1881 as a result of assessing the needs in the surrounding communities.

T.M. Campbell was hired by Tuskegee Institute as the first African American outreach educator in 1906. Campbell was the operator of the “movable school”, a farm demonstration wagon, which went door to door to assist farmers who could not attend formal training programs. John B. Pierce was hired in a similar position one month later. He was hired by Hampton Institute to conduct farm demonstration work. In 1916, an African American county agent by the name of O.S. O’Neal implemented the “Ham and Egg Show” at Fort Valley State College. This demonstration project continued annually for more than 50 years. It was designed to assist farmers with the production and processing of swine and poultry. By 1923, nearly 300 African

American agents were employed in the southern states (Mayberry, 1989).

Similar outreach activities were being conducted in Texas as well. In 1920, Calvin Waller became the State Leader for Negro Extension. As such, he was responsible for overseeing Negro outreach efforts in Texas. In 1920, Extension outreach worked was being conducted in 14 counties. By 1941, African American agents were conducting Extension outreach efforts in 51 counties across the state. These agents were employed through the Extension program at Prairie View A&M University and were charged with teaching African Americans to raise crops and livestock, to improve their homes, and to participate in community activities (Smith, 1992).

While the number of African American agents continued to grow, there were very few public funds available to support their work. Typically, federal funds were given to the states and funding went to the 1862 land-grant institution. Since the Smith-Lever Act made no provisions for the sharing of the funds, only a very small amount went to the 1890 land-grant institutions. When funds were provided, the 1862 land-grant institutions provided supervision and administration of the programs.

In 1964, the Negro Extension System was terminated with the passage of the Civil Rights Act. Extension outreach in a formal setting was taken away from the 1890 institutions. It was not until 1972, that the 1890 institutions began receiving federal funds to operate Extension programs. This was due to several amendments to the Smith-Lever Act and the initiation of USDA formula funds



(Willis, 1998).

### **Farm Service Agency Loan Programs**

The Farm Service Agency (FSA) makes direct and guaranteed farm ownership and operating loans to family-size farmers and ranchers who cannot obtain commercial credit from a bank, Farm Credit System institution, or other lender. FSA loans can be used to purchase land, livestock, equipment, feed, seed, and supplies. Loans also can be used to construct buildings or make farm improvements (Farm Service Agency, 2005).

FSA loans are often provided to beginning farmers who cannot qualify for conventional loans because they have insufficient financial resources. FSA also helps established farmers who have suffered financial setbacks from natural disasters, or whose resources are too limited to maintain profitable farming operations.

FSA guaranteed loans provide conventional agricultural lenders with up to a 95 percent guarantee of the principal loan amount. The lender is responsible for servicing a borrower's account for the life of the loan. All loans must meet certain qualifying criteria to be eligible for guarantees, and FSA has the right and responsibility to monitor the lender's servicing activities. Farmers interested in these loans must apply to a conventional lender, which then arranges for the FSA guarantee (Farm Service Agency, 2004).

FSA makes and services direct farm ownership and farm operating

loans. The agency receives limited funding for direct loans, and applicants sometimes have to wait for funds to become available. To qualify for a direct loan, the applicant must be able to show sufficient repayment ability and pledge enough collateral to fully secure the loan (Farm Service Agency, 2004).

### **Loans for Socially Disadvantaged Persons**

The Farm Service Agency can make and guarantee loans to socially disadvantaged applicants to buy and operate family-size farms and ranches. Funds specifically for these loans are reserved each year. Non-reserved funds also can be utilized.

A socially disadvantaged farmer or rancher is one of a group whose members have been subjected to racial, ethnic, or gender prejudice because of their identity as members of the group without regard to their individual qualities. For purposes of this program, socially disadvantaged groups are women, African Americans, Native Americans, Alaskan Natives, Hispanics, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (Farm Service Agency, 2004).

This program:

- Targets direct and guaranteed loan assistance to socially disadvantaged persons;
- Discovers and removes barriers that prevent full participation of those persons in FSA's farm loan programs; and
- Provides information and assistance to applicants to help them

develop sound farm management practices, analyzes problems, and plans the best use of available resources essential for success in farming or ranching.

Direct loans are made to applicants by FSA and include both farm operating and farm ownership loans. Guaranteed farm loans also may be made for ownership or operating purposes, and may be made by any lending institution subject to federal or state supervision (banks, savings and loans, and units of the Farm Credit System) and guaranteed by FSA. Some state governments also operate farm loan programs that are eligible for FSA guarantees. Typically, FSA guarantees 90 or 95 percent of a loan against any loss that might be incurred if the loan fails (Farm Service Agency, 2004).

Farm Ownership Loans may be used to purchase or enlarge a farm or ranch, purchase easements or rights of way needed in the farm's operation, erect or improve buildings, promote soil and water conservation and development, and pay closing costs. Reserved direct farm ownership loan funds can be used only to purchase a farm or ranch. Guaranteed farm ownership funds also may be used to refinance debt.

Farm Operating Loans may be used to purchase livestock, poultry, farm equipment, feed, seed, fuel, fertilizer, chemicals, hail and other crop insurance, food, clothing, medical care, and hired labor. Funds also may be used to refinance debt and to install or improve water systems for home use, livestock or irrigation, and other improvements (Farm Service Agency, 2004).

Individuals and entities primarily and directly engaged in farming and ranching on family-size operations may apply. A family-size farm is considered to be one that a family can operate and manage itself. In addition to being members of a socially disadvantaged group, individual applicants under this program must meet all requirements for FSA's regular farm loan program assistance, including:

- Have a satisfactory history of meeting credit obligations;
- Have sufficient education, training, or at least 1 year of experience in managing or operating a farm or ranch within the last 5 years for a direct operating loan, or, for a direct farm ownership loan, have participated in the business operation of a farm or ranch for 3 years;
- Be a citizen of the United States (or a legal resident alien), including Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, and certain former Pacific Island Trust Territories;
- Be unable to obtain credit elsewhere at reasonable rates and terms to meet actual needs; and
- Possess legal capacity to incur loan obligations.

In the case of an entity, the members holding a majority interest must meet the same eligibility requirements. The entity must be authorized to operate a farm or ranch in the state where the actual operation is located. Additionally, the entity must be owned by U.S. citizens or legal resident aliens, and the

socially disadvantaged members must hold a majority interest in the entity (Farm Service Agency, 2004).

If the individuals holding a majority interest in the entity are related by blood or marriage, at least one stockholder, member, or partner must operate the family farm or ranch. If they are not related by blood or marriage, those holding a majority interest must operate the farm or ranch.

Repayment terms for direct operating loans depend on the collateral securing the loan and usually run from 1 to 7 years. Interest rates for direct loans are set periodically according to the government's cost of borrowing. Repayment terms for direct farm ownership loans are up to 40 years.

Interest rates for guaranteed loans are established by the lender, but may not exceed the rate the lender charges its average farm loan customer. Guaranteed loan terms are set by the lender.

Applications for all FSA direct loan programs are made through FSA's local offices. Guaranteed loan applications are made with the lender.

### **Loans for Beginning Farmers and Ranchers**

The Farm Service Agency provides direct and guaranteed loans to beginning farmers and ranchers who are unable to obtain financing from commercial credit sources. Each fiscal year, the agency targets a portion of its direct and guaranteed farm ownership and operating loan funds to beginning farmers and ranchers (Farm Service Agency, 2004).

A beginning farmer or rancher is an individual or entity who (1) has not operated a farm or ranch for more than 10 years; (2) meets the loan eligibility requirements of the program to which he/she is applying; (3) substantially participates in the operation; and, (4) for farm ownership loan purposes, does not own a farm greater than 30 percent of the average size farm in the county. (Note: all applicants for direct farm ownership loans must have participated in business operation of a farm for at least 3 years.) If the applicant is an entity, all members must be related by blood or marriage, and all stockholders in a corporation must be eligible beginning farmers (Farm Service Agency, 2004).

Maximum loan amounts are:

- Direct farm ownership or operating loans: \$200,000;
- Guaranteed farm ownership or operating loans: \$813,000 (Amount varies annually based on inflation).

FSA has a special down payment farm ownership loan program to assist beginning farmers and ranchers to purchase a farm or ranch. This program also provides a means for retiring farmers and ranchers to transfer their land to a future generation:

- To qualify, an applicant must make a cash down payment of at least 10 percent of the purchase price.
- FSA may provide a maximum amount equal to 40 percent of the purchase price or appraised value, whichever is less. The term of the loan is 15 years at a fixed interest rate of 4 percent.

- The remaining balance may be obtained from a commercial lender or private party. FSA can provide up to a 95 percent guarantee if financing is obtained from a commercial lender. Participating lenders do not have to pay a guarantee fee.
- The purchase price or appraised value, whichever is lower, may not exceed \$250,000.

FSA advertises acquired farm property within 15 days of acquisition.

Eligible beginning farmers and ranchers are given first priority to purchase these properties at the appraised market value for the first 135 days after acquisition. If more than one eligible beginning farmer or rancher offers to purchase the property, the buyer is chosen randomly (Farm Service Agency, 2004).

Beginning farmer or rancher applicants may choose to participate in a joint financing plan that also is available to other applicants. In this program, FSA lends up to 50 percent of the amount financed, and another lender provides 50 percent or more. FSA will charge a reduced interest rate on the loan (Farm Service Agency, 2004).

Applications for direct loan assistance may be submitted to the FSA local office serving the area where the operation is located. For guaranteed loans, applicants must apply to a commercial lender who participates in the Guaranteed Loan Program. Local FSA offices have lists of participating lenders (Farm Service Agency, 2004).

## **Emergency Loan Program**

USDA's Farm Service Agency provides emergency loans to help producers recover from production and physical losses due to drought, flooding, other natural disasters, or quarantine (Farm Service Agency, 2004).

Emergency loan funds may be used to:

- Restore or replace essential property;
- Pay all or part of production costs associated with the disaster year;
- Pay essential family living expenses;
- Reorganize the farming operation; and
- Refinance certain debts.

Emergency loans may be made to farmers and ranchers who:

- Own or operate land located in a county declared by the President of the United States as a disaster area or designated by the Secretary of Agriculture as a disaster area or quarantine area (for physical losses only, the FSA Administrator may authorize emergency loan assistance);
- Are established family farm operators and have sufficient farming or ranching experience;
- Are citizens or permanent residents of the United States;



- Have suffered at least a 30-percent loss in crop production or a physical loss to livestock, livestock products, real estate, or chattel property;
- Have an acceptable credit history;
- Are unable to receive credit from commercial sources;
- Can provide collateral to secure the loan; and
- Have repayment ability.

FSA loan requirements are different from those of other lenders. Some of the more significant differences are the following:

- Borrowers must keep acceptable farm records;
- Borrowers must operate in accordance with a farm plan they develop and agree to with local FSA staff; and
- Borrowers may be required to participate in a financial management-training program and obtain crop insurance.

All emergency loans must be fully collateralized. The specific type of collateral may vary depending on the loan purpose, repayment ability and the individual circumstances of the applicant. If applicants cannot provide adequate collateral, their repayment ability may be considered as collateral to secure the loan. A first lien is required on property or products acquired, produced, or refinanced with loan funds (Farm Service Agency, 2004).

Producers can borrow up to 100 percent of actual production or physical losses, to a maximum amount of \$500,000. Loans for crop, livestock, and non-

real estate losses are normally repaid within 1 to 7 years, depending on the loan purpose, repayment ability, and collateral available as loan security. In special circumstances, terms of up to 20 years may be authorized. Loans for physical losses to real estate normally are repaid within 30 years. In certain circumstances, repayment may be made over a maximum of 40 years (Farm Service Agency, 2004).

Applications for emergency loans must be received within 8 months of the county's disaster or quarantine designation date. Borrowers who receive temporary assistance are expected to return to conventional credit sources. Emergency loans are a temporary source of credit, and borrowers are reviewed periodically to determine whether they can return to commercial credit.

FSA provides certain loan servicing benefits to borrowers whose accounts are distressed or delinquent due to circumstances beyond their control. These benefits include:

- Re-amortization, restructuring, and/or deferral of loans;
- Rescheduling at the Limited Resource (lower interest) rate;
- Acceptance of conservation easements on environmentally sensitive land in exchange for reduction of debt;
- Writing down the debt to its current market value (delinquent borrowers only).

If none of these options results in a feasible farming operation, borrowers may be offered the opportunity to purchase their debt at its current market value.

If this is not possible, FSA can consider debt settlement based on the producer's inability to repay. In some cases, where a successful operation cannot be developed, FSA works with the borrower to help him or her retain the homestead and up to 10 acres of land. Farms that come into FSA ownership are sold at market value, with a preference to beginning farmers and ranchers (Farm Service Agency, 2004).

The eventual goal of FSA's farm credit programs is to graduate its borrowers to commercial credit. Once a farmer is able to obtain credit from the commercial lending sector, the Agency's mission of providing temporary, supervised credit is complete (Farm Service Agency, 2004).

### **Discrimination in Programs Conducted by USDA**

Recent legal actions taken by farmers of color have shown new light on the issue of racial discrimination in the USDA. Class action lawsuits such as *Pigford v. Glickman* (Black Farmers Lawsuit), *Garcia v. Veneman* (Hispanic Farmers Lawsuit), and *Keepseagle v. Veneman* (Native American Lawsuit) have increased awareness of this issue with the general public. However, a review of the literature indicates that racism and discrimination have long been practiced within the agricultural community. This racism and discrimination continues to have a significant impact on the sustainability of farmers of color. Racism and discrimination in U.S. agriculture occurred at the hands of those agencies that were assigned the responsibility of assisting American farmers and serving

America's people. History has shown that agencies within the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) engaged in discriminatory practices against underserved groups in the United States. Farmers of color

...have lost significant amounts of land and potential farm income as a result of discrimination by FSA (Farm Service Agency) programs and the programs of its predecessor agencies, ASCS (Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service) and FmHA (Farmers Home Administration) (Civil Rights Action Team, 1997, p. 30).

These claims of discrimination were not just unproven allegations directed at the USDA, but were documented facts revealed through numerous reports released by the government and through sworn testimonies given in special hearings on Capitol Hill. In a hearing before the United States House of Representatives' Committee on Agriculture (1997), former Secretary of Agriculture Dan Glickman made the following statement:

We have a long history of both discrimination and perceptions of unfairness that go literally back to the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. For those who look back on the progress made in the 1960s of the historic civil rights laws passed in that time and think we got the job done, I can say from my experiences at USDA, we do not yet fully practice what we preach. I've talked to people who have lost their farm. Good people, who lost their family land not because of a bad

crop, not because of a flood, but because of the color of their skin (p. 94).

The examination of discrimination by the USDA is not a new topic. Research revealed that this issue was thoroughly examined and documented for over four decades. In 1965, the U. S. Commission on Civil Rights released a report titled *Equal Opportunity in Farm Programs: An Appraisal of Services Rendered by Agencies of the United States Department of Agriculture*. This report concluded that discrimination existed in the USDA's external program delivery activities. In fact, the USDA

...generally failed to assume responsibility for assuring equal opportunity and equal treatment to all those entitled to benefit from its programs. Instead, the prevailing practice has been to follow local patterns of racial segregation and discrimination in providing assistance...(p. 100).

The commission also expressed concerns that while the USDA had been ...instrumental in raising the economic, educational, and social levels of thousands of farm and rural families...[a] quarter of a million Negro families stand as a glaring exception to this picture of progress (U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, 1965, p. 8).

The Commission described the Black farmer "as the group most depressed economically, most deprived educationally, and most oppressed socially" (p.100). The commission went on to say that this group had "been consistently

denied access to many services, provided with inferior services when served, and segregated in federally financed agricultural programs whose task was to raise their standard of living” (p. 100).

Seventeen years later, in 1982, the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights again examined the issue of discrimination and the decline of Black farming in America. Its findings documented a trail of discrimination and other unethical practices within the USDA, in particular the Farmers Home Administration (FmHA). According to the report, “the tragic decline of Black farms is rooted in our Nation’s racial history, especially in the South” (U. S. Commission on Civil Rights, 1982, p. 176). The report concluded that the FmHA has a history of not placing “adequate emphasis or assigning priority to the crisis facing Black farmers” and in some cases, “FmHA may have hindered the efforts of small Black farm operators to remain a viable force in agriculture” (U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, p. IV). The Commission also concluded that there were widespread prejudicial practices in loan approval, loan servicing, and farm management assistance as administered by the Farmers Home Administration (U.S. Commission on Civil Rights).

Since the release of the 1982 report by the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, several other government reports have been released regarding discriminatory practices within USDA agencies. The most recent reports released include *The Minority Farmer: A Disappearing American Resource-Has the Farmers Home Administration Been the Primary Catalyst?* (United States

House of Representatives, Committee on Government Operations, 1990); *Treatment of Minority and Limited Resource Producers by the U.S. Department of Agriculture* (U. S. House of Representatives, Committee on Agriculture, subcommittee on Department of Operations, Nutrition, and Foreign Agriculture, 1997); *Civil Rights at the U.S. Department of Agriculture* (Civil Rights Action Team, 1997); and *USDA's Civil Rights Programs and Responsibilities* (United States House of Representatives, Committee on Agriculture, Subcommittee on Department Operations, Oversight, Nutrition, and Forestry, 1999). The most compelling of these reports occurred in 1997 by the Civil Rights Action Team (CRAT).

In 1997, Secretary of Agriculture Dan Glickman appointed the Civil Rights Action Team (CRAT). The mission of the CRAT was to investigate discriminatory practices by USDA in regards to minority, small, limited-resource farmers and USDA employees. During the month of January 1997, CRAT conducted 12 listening sessions in 11 different locations throughout the United States. Small and limited resource farmers gave testimonies. These farmers

...told stories of years of bias, hostility, greed, ruthlessness, rudeness, and indifference not only by USDA employees, but also by the local county committees that provide access to USDA's Farm Service Agency programs (CRAT, 1997, p. 3).

They also described their experiences in being denied equal access to USDA's programs, unfair lending practices, receiving loan approvals after the planting

season was over, reductions in the requested loan amount, and longer processing times for minority loan applications. On average, it took three times as long to process applications for farmers of color compared to other farmers in several southeastern states (CRAT, p. 21). This report cited testimony that described the USDA system as being

...broken, a system in which field-level workers are forced to work under an incentive system that rewards service to large, financially sound producers while working against small and minority farmers (CRAT, p. 8).

The CRAT report also found that participation in some programs had been blocked by discriminatory actions of some county office staffs (p. 21).

The number of small scale farms, particularly those owned by farmers of color, continues to decline and the production of agricultural products has become increasingly concentrated. The USDA Civil Rights Action Team (CRAT) expressed concerns about the issue of concentration in U.S. agriculture during its' investigation. There were also questions about the adequacy of Federal programs and services to small farmers. This led to the appointment of a commission to investigate the needs of small farms in the U.S. The Secretary of Agriculture established the National Commission on Small Farms (Economic Research Service, 1998). The 146 recommendations of this national commission were presented in January 1998 in a document entitled *A Time to*



*Act.* One of the recommendations called for investigating illegal or discriminatory practices in the marketplace.

The majority of farmers apply for operating or ownership loans through Farm Service Agency (Farm Service Agency, 1998). Because many farmers of color have limited financial resources, they are more likely to turn to the Farm Service Agency for loans rather than to apply for credit through private lenders (Koenig & Dobson, 1999). Several steps must be accomplished for these loans to be approved. Step one involves the determination of whether or not the farmer qualifies for an FSA loan. If the applicant qualifies, the application advances to the eligibility stage. In order to be determined eligible, a loan applicant must:

- I. Have sufficient education, training, or experience in managing and operating a farm;
- II. Be a citizen or legal resident of the United States;
- III. Have the legal capacity to incur the obligations of the loan;
- IV. Be unable to obtain sufficient credit elsewhere at reasonable rates;
- V. Be the owner or tenant operator of a family farm after the loan is closed;
- VI. Have not had a previous direct or guaranteed loan which resulted in a loss to the agency and not be delinquent on any federal debt (Farm Service Agency, 1998).

The eligibility stage also involves an FSA representative and the loan applicant meeting to review and discuss the application. The application is then presented to the county committee to determine eligibility. The application also is reviewed for repayment ability, security and compliance with other regulations (Farm Service Agency, 1998).

Discrimination can occur in each of these stages. Decisions of whether or not a farmer is eligible to receive a loan or the availability of funds are determined by county committees that are elected by farmers in the county (Harvard, 1998). In many instances, "... committees are often found with few or no women or minority members in areas where women and minorities comprise a significant proportion of persons participating in the programs" (Payne, 1991, p.17). Due to the lack of diversity represented on county committees and on county staffs, farmers of color are "...less likely to hear about a program and have a more difficult time participating in USDA programs because they lack specific information on available services" (CRAT, 1997, p. 26). In 1994, Congress passed legislation that requires county committees to be representative of the agricultural producers in the county (CRAT).

In counties with relatively high concentrations of minority farmers without elected minority county committee members, FSA has required appointment of minority advisors to increase the awareness of and participation of minorities in FSA programs (CRAT, p. 20).

These county advisors are not allowed to vote. Due to the structure of the USDA, opportunities for discrimination in the processing of loan applications are extremely high. Frequently, loan decisions are influenced by the culture of the county and the makeup of the committees. Several reports have indicated how the communities have failed to break with history and an environment that is characterized by racist behavior, therefore restricting and limiting the survival of the farmers of color (United States Commission on Civil Rights, 1982, p. 177). Payne and CRAT have concluded that at the county level "... both the employees and the programs assume the character of the dominant culture" (Payne, p. 16) and are "influenced by the values of their communities and county committees rather than by standard policies promulgated at the national level" (CRAT, p. 18).

It also should be noted that discrimination was not always direct and visible. It was found that indirect discrimination often played a role in the success or failure of minority farmers. Indirect discrimination occurred when a USDA employee was unwilling to assist a low-educated client with completing a difficult loan application form, or the employee informed a client of mistakes on an application one or two days prior to the application deadline, thereby, limiting the client's ability to make the necessary corrections and submit the application on time. Indirect discrimination also occurred when county staff was unwilling to assist farmers in understanding the program eligibility requirements and by failing to provide basic information about programs (CRAT, 1997).

In 1997, a class-action lawsuit was filed by Black farmers against the USDA. On April 14, 1999, a settlement was approved. The Black farmers' lawsuit resulted in a settlement that was based on two components or tracks (Robinson, 2000). Track A called for a \$50,000 settlement plus the tax liability on that amount. To qualify under Track A, the farmer must have presented evidence of discrimination. Additionally, if farmers had current debt with the USDA, they also could receive a write-off of that debt and the taxes owed on it (Robinson, 2000). On the other hand, if a farmer believed that the \$50,000 settlement was unfair because of the extreme circumstances of his or her case, he or she could select Track B. Farmers who chose Track B were required to submit documentation supporting their claim. If it was proven successfully, a higher settlement would be awarded. If they failed to support their claim, they would not receive anything.

### **The Small Farmer Outreach Training and Technical Assistance Program**

The Small Farmer Outreach Training and Technical Assistance Program is a federally funded program sponsored by the United States Department of Agriculture. This program is designed to provide agricultural assistance and education to farmers from socially disadvantaged groups.

In 1987, the

...Agricultural Credit Act of 1987 required Farmers Home

Administration to assist socially disadvantaged individuals by

establishing an outreach program, to make farm ownership loans and inventory farmland more available, and to continue to provide technical assistance (Shea & Lyons, 1990, p. 69).

Eleven institutions which had a proven track record of working with small, limited-resource farmers received grants from the Farmers Home Administration. Prairie View A&M University was one of the initial institutions selected to receive these grant funds and to start what came to be known as small projects. These projects were the forerunners to the Small Farmer Outreach Training and Technical Assistance Program.

The Minority Farmer Rights Act (Section 2501), entitled the “Outreach and Technical Assistance Program for Socially Disadvantaged Farmers and Ranchers,” was incorporated into the 1990 Farm Bill. Title XXV, Section 2501 of the Food, Agriculture, Conservation, and Trade Act of 1990 charged the Consolidated Farm Service Agency (CFSA) with the implementation of the Outreach and Assistance Grants for Socially Disadvantaged Farmers and Ranchers Program. Socially disadvantaged farmers or ranchers are defined as farmers or ranchers who “...have been subjected to racial or ethnic prejudice because of their identity as members of a group without regard to their individual qualities” (Food, Agriculture, Conservation, and Trade Act of 1990, p. 4).

The United States Department of Agriculture provides competitive grants to institutions that “...have demonstrated experience in providing agricultural education or other agricultural-related services to socially disadvantaged family

farmers and ranchers in their region” (Food, Agriculture, Conservation, and Trade Act, 1990). These institutions include 1890 land grant colleges and universities, including Tuskegee University, community-based organizations, Native American Community Colleges and Hispanic Servicing Institutions. These institutions and organizations provide individualized training in custom farm plans, production and marketing practices, and record keeping. Twenty-eight institutions received five-year grants in 1994.

These grants created the Small Farmer Outreach Training and Technical Assistance Program. The objectives of the program are to enhance the ability of small scale, limited resource farmers and ranchers to operate farming or ranching enterprises, and to enhance the ability of small scale farmers to produce income adequate to service debt, maintain farm operations and provide a reasonable life style.

The programs focused on reversing or slowing down the decline of socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers leaving agriculture. Females, African Americans, Native Americans, Asian or Pacific Islanders, and operators of Spanish origin are considered to be part of the socially disadvantaged group (Food, Agriculture, Conservation, and Trade Act of 1990, p. 4).

Grant recipients are responsible for the following activities: (a) providing technical assistance to qualifying applicants, (b) assisting them in applying for loans, (c) developing sound farm management practices, (d) identifying and removing obstacles that prevent the full participation of socially disadvantaged

farmers in FSA ownership and operating loan programs, (e) obtaining information on application and bidding procedures, and (f) testing innovative solutions to existing or anticipated issues or problems that the farmer may encounter (Dismukes, Harwood, & Bentley, 1997; Federal Register, 2001).

### **Description of Model Educational Programs for Non-Traditional Audiences**

The issue of educational programming for people of color is longstanding and persistent. Educators must learn to recognize, honor, and incorporate the personal abilities of the learner into their teaching strategies (Gay, 2000). According to Gay, “teachers must recognize the important influence culture has on learning and make teaching processes compatible with the sociocultural contexts and frames of reference of ethnically diverse students” (p. 45). She refers to this as being culturally responsive. Cooperation, community, and connectedness are central features of culturally responsive teaching. Teachers who practice culturally relevant methods encourage a community of learners who learn collaboratively (Ladson-Billings, 1994).

The design of generic educational programs targeting specific audiences should be avoided. Special precaution should be taken by program planners to identify the unique characteristics and needs of their targeted audience. Educational programs that are designed to address individual needs are the most effective (Seevers et al., 1997). Ladson-Billings (1992) explains that

culturally responsive teachers develop intellectual, emotional, and political learning by “using cultural referents to impart knowledge, skills, and attitudes” (p. 382). Cunningham (2000) emphasizes the importance learner collaborate in the decision making process concerning educational strategies.

A wide array of program planning models exists in the literature; however, very few program-planning models are designed exclusively for the African American farmer. Leading researchers in the areas of adult and extension education have made valuable contributions to the program planning literature (Axxin & Axxin, 1997; Boone, 1985; Boyle, 1981; Cervero & Wilson, 1994; Knowles, 1980; Seevers et al., 1997). They each proposed innovative program planning models. Each of these models exhibit similar characteristics. They are based on a format that calls for: (a) an analysis of the situation, (b) identification of the targeted audience, (c) an assessment of the needs of the targeted audience, (d) establishing goals and objectives for the program, (e) identifying learning experiences to meet those objectives, (f) organizing learning experiences, and (g) evaluating the program. Various components of each of these models could be used in designing programs for African American farmers; however, the ideas presented by Cervero and Wilson were more representative of the problems and issues facing planners of American agricultural extension education programs targeting African American farmers. Cervero and Wilson captured the essence of what many planners for farmers of



color are faced with everyday. These two authors presented an alternative to the traditional form of program planning.

Cervero and Wilson (1994) suggested that the existing literature on program planning has serious deficiencies and is based on an unrealistic view of the world and the program planning process. They argued that traditional theories and program planning models give the illusion that “planners face well-defined problems and have a full array of alternatives, complete information about the context, and unlimited resources to solve these problems” (p.118). In reality, this is not the case. They challenge program planners to be honest in their writings and to describe what really happens in the process, whether it is good or bad.

There are several socio-economic barriers that may hinder limited-resource farmers’ access to information. These barriers include lack of land, high levels of poverty, time constraints, unemployment, underemployment, lack of farm equipment, low levels of education, language and cultural barriers (Berton, 2004). Cervero and Wilson provided these words of wisdom: “planners need a working account of how power relationships define planning situations and how they support or threaten a democratic planning process” (p. 117).

There are three types of opportunities within which learning occurs for adults. They are formal institutional settings, nonformal settings and informal or self directed. (Merriam & Caffarella, 1999). Nonformal education is defined as “...learning opportunities that take place outside of formal educational settings

that complement or supplement the needs of underserved adults...” (Merriam & Caffarella, 1999, p. 28-29). Nonformal education is usually less structured, more flexible, and based on the needs of the targeted audience. Informal education is similar to nonformal education; however, this type of learning occurs in the learners’ natural settings (Merriam & Caffarella, p. 34).

Farmers of color have special needs that are the result of the social, political, economic, and historical conditions that they faced (Beauford & Nelson, 1988; Crowe, Bryne, & Hale, 2001; Malach, 2000; McCray, 1994). The literature typically referred to this process as “incorporating the sociocultural context into program planning” (Axxin & Axxin, 1997; Boone, 1985; Guy, 1999; Merriam & Caffarella, 1999; Seevers et al., 1997). Picciano (2004) stated that “educators must be prepared for the mistrust and lack of credibility toward USDA that many producers feel, based on their past and sometimes current experiences” (p.3).

What does “incorporating the sociocultural context into program planning” actually mean? What is involved in this process? This means understanding that race, age, gender, and the social, political, and economic environment all are factors that should contribute to the decision making process regarding the program’s content, identification of the targeted audience, what will be learned, and where and when this learning will occur (Merriam & Caffarella, 1999). According to Merriam and Caffarella, when planning educational programs, it is important not only to take into consideration the needs of learners and how to facilitate their learning, but it is equally important that the program planner

focuses on the sociocultural perspective of each learner. Boone (1985) supported the idea of planning programs from a sociocultural perspective. In program planning, the first responsibility of programmer should be to analyze the sociocultural context of the desired change, identify the educational needs and take the appropriate action (Boone, 1985).

The sociocultural context of learning closely resembles the idea of culturally relevant adult education. Guy (1999) wrote extensively about the importance of culturally relevant adult education. He described cultural relevant programs as those in which “adult educators strive to help learners who face oppression on a daily basis, take control of their lives” (p. 94). He envisioned that these learners would in turn become “stronger, confident, agents of change not only for themselves but for their families, their communities, and the country” (p. 94).

Educational programs will be reflective of their individual needs and incorporate their ideas, beliefs, and values. Planners of educational programs for non-traditional farmers should: (a) have a clear understanding of whom their targeted audience is, (b) have a clear understanding of the issues and problems that they are facing, (c) be able to design and implement appropriate educational strategies, and (d) effectively evaluate the program (Cervero & Wilson, 1994).

The traditional learning format used by the Cooperative Extension Service often relied on the use of group meetings, farm demonstrations, farm field days, and publications to increase the knowledge base of farmers (Simon, 1990).

“However, these methods did not always fit the life style, attitudes, educational levels, and financial constraints of small limited resource farmers” (Simon, p. 183). Some innovative ways to help limited-resource producers is to identify the real barriers, create effective materials, involve constituents in developing programs, establish trust, provide one-on-one training, use demonstration to teach skills and make use of community leaders (Berton, 2004).

### **CHAPTER III**

#### **METHODOLOGY**

The purpose of this study was to examine the effectiveness of the small farmer outreach training and technical assistance programs as they relate to farmers of color. This study examined changes in record keeping techniques, farmer's level of participation in community programs and changes in farm financial condition as a result of participation in this project. Additionally, demographic data including age, ethnicity, marital status, educational level and gender were obtained. This information is helpful in tailoring the small farmer outreach training and technical assistance program to address the needs of specific groups within this targeted population.

A research method used was the systematic sample. This sampling technique is often used when the names of persons in the population of interest are available in a list format such as an attendance list. The researcher used a self-administered questionnaire was used to collect data. This type of questionnaire is generally mailed to the individual included in the sample.

The self-administered questionnaire does not require an interview. The weakness of this method is that it can result in a lower response rate because we have very little contact with the subjects. This lower response rate can introduce bias into the sample because the people who answer the survey may not represent the targeted population. To eliminate some of the bias, researchers can contact those individuals who did not respond by follow-up

letters and phone calls (Ott, 1993).

Of the original 89 survey instruments mailed, total of 68 (76.4%) were completed and returned by participants over a 5 week period. Of the remaining 21 surveys, 8 were returned because of incorrect addresses.

### **Population**

The population for the study included African American and Hispanic participants enrolled in the Small Farmer Outreach Training and Technical Assistance Program between October 2001 and September 2004. The researcher surveyed participants in four Texas counties where the program was conducted. The participants all resided and/or farmed in Cameron, Hidalgo, Starr or Willacy counties. The participants' names and addresses were obtained from the Extension agent conducting the program in the targeted counties. The list contained every agricultural producer in the targeted counties that the Extension agent assisted with farm management and/or loan package development.

### **Instrumentation**

Data were collected from participants enrolled in the small farmer outreach training and technical assistance program through a written questionnaire developed by the researcher. According to Tuckman (1999), questionnaires "help researchers to convert into data the information they

receive directly from people (research subjects).”

The questionnaire was designed to evaluate the effectiveness of the program for farmers of color. According to Cozby (1993), surveys use self-reported measurement techniques to question people about themselves – their attitudes, behaviors, and demographics. Surveys may employ careful sampling techniques to obtain an accurate description of an entire population...When scientific sampling techniques are used, the survey results can be interpreted as an accurate representation of the entire population (pp. 56-57).

The survey instrument consisted of 35 questions divided into four parts. The survey included a participant profile, a farm profile, information on farm management and record keeping and information on program participation.

Part I of the survey, the participant profile, sought to obtain the personal characteristics of the program participant and focused mainly on demographic data. The respondents were asked to check the appropriate answer in the space provided. The characteristics investigated in part one of the survey included the county in which the participant farms/ranches and/or resides, the participant's age, ethnicity, sex, marital status and educational level.

Part II of the survey was a farm profile consisting of 12 questions. Questions sought insight on farm size, land ownership and acquisition, total household income, percentage of income from farming, farming status and the number of farm employees. Additionally, information was gathered on farm planning, assistance with farm planning and the enterprises grown on the farm.

Part III of the survey focused on the farm financial records of the participant. The questions sought information on the person(s) keeping farm records, the type of record keeping system being used and the length of time that the farmer had been using that particular system.

The final section of the survey was designed to gather information concerning program participation. The questions asked the length of time the participant had been involved in this program, what types of educational programs and events the producer attended, groups with which the participant was involved and the farmer's leadership activities in organizations and the community. Other questions sought to gather information concerning sources of financial and technical assistance, loan application through the USDA and participant benefits from the program. Lastly, the participants were able to list ways in which the project could be improved.

### **Pilot Test of the Instrument**

“Most studies benefit substantially from the precaution of running pilot tests on their questionnaires, leading to revisions based on the results of the test” (Tuckman, 1999). The questionnaire was reviewed and screened by the members of the researcher's doctoral committee for content and clarity. After being reviewed and screened, the instrument was pilot tested by a group of 10 small farmers, not included in the selected participant group, on November 21, 2004. The respondents were asked to complete all sections of the questionnaire



and note all questions and concerns regarding clarity, format and intent. The length of time required to complete the survey was approximately 20 minutes. Following the pilot test, some minor revisions were made based on the feedback obtained as a result of the pilot test.

### **Procedure**

A questionnaire designed to gather data for this study was administered to participants enrolled in the Small Farmer Outreach Training and Technical Assistance Project in the four designated Texas counties. The counties of Hidalgo, Starr, Willacy and Cameron were selected because the Small Farmer Outreach Training and Technical Assistance Program had been on-going continuously for 10 years. The same Extension agent had been assisting the participants over this time period. Due to employee turnover, this was not been the case in other areas of the state where the program was conducted. This questionnaire was be administered by a member of the Cooperative Extension Program staff.

### **Data Analysis**

Results of the study were reported both numerically and graphically. Analysis of the data followed principles prescribed in *Educational Research: An Introduction*, by Borg and Gall (1989). Instrument design followed principles outlined in *Conducting Educational Research*, by Tuckman (1999).

Data collected from the survey instruments were entered into a personal computer and analyzed using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences® (SPSS). Descriptive statistics including means, percentages, and frequencies were used to describe the demographics, performance, and effectiveness of the Small Farmer Outreach Training and Technical Assistance Program.

Differences between the variables were detected using *t*-tests. Confidence level of  $\alpha = .10$  was set apriori.

## **CHAPTER IV**

### **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS**

The purpose of this study was to examine the effectiveness of the small farmer outreach training and technical assistance programs as related to farmers of color. The items to be evaluated included financial considerations, educational effectiveness, access and acquisition of farm loans, participation in Extension sponsored events and involvement in community activities.

The following research questions were identified to accomplish the purposes of the study:

1. What are the demographic characteristics of the farmers based upon age, gender, marital status, ethnicity and level of education?
2. What are the characteristics of participants in the small farmer outreach training and technical assistance program as related to farm operations and record keeping?
3. What are the changes in community activities as a result of participating in the small farmer outreach training and technical assistance program?
4. What are the changes in the farming operation in terms of financial assistance, technical assistance, the process of obtaining a loan and the success rate in the acquisition of farm loans as a result of participation in the small farmer outreach training and technical assistance program?

The research questions served as a guide for presenting the findings of the study. Information concerning each objective will be presented in separate sections.

### **Findings Related to Question 1**

Question 1 was to identify demographic characteristics of Small Farmer Outreach Training and Technical Assistance Program participants based upon age, gender, marital status, ethnicity and level of education. This information was collected through a profile of the participant and his or her farming operation. Information related to this objective is presented in the tables to follow.

This study focused on program participants with farming or ranching operations in four selected counties. Of the 68 respondents, a majority of the participants (38.2%) indicated that their agricultural operations were in Hidalgo County. Eleven participants (16.2%) had operations in Cameron County, 19 participants had operations in Starr County. The remaining 12 respondents (17.6%) farmed or ranched in Willacy County. This result is outlined in Table 1.

Table 1. Counties in Which the Participants Farm or Ranch

<b>County</b>	<b><u>n</u></b>	<b>%</b>
Cameron	11	16.2
Hidalgo	26	38.2
Starr	19	27.9
Willacy	12	17.6
Total	68	99.9*

\*Number not equal to 100 due to rounding

The age of the participants ranged greatly, from the teens to the seventies. As illustrated in Table 2, a majority of the participants (70.6%) were between the ages of 35 and 64 years old. Three of the participants (4.4%) were less than 25 years of age. Five of the participants (7.4%) were between the ages of 25 and 34 years of age. Eleven participants (16.2%) were between the ages of 65 and 74 years of age. Only one participant (1.5%) reported being greater than 75 years of age.

Table 2. Age of Program Participants

<b>Age</b>	<b><u>n</u></b>	<b>%</b>
< 24	3	4.4
25 – 34	5	7.4
35 – 44	14	20.6
45 – 54	17	25.0
55 – 64	17	25.0
65 – 74	11	16.2
75 or above	1	1.5
Total	68	100.1*

\*Number not equal to 100 due to rounding

Gender information of the participants is reported in Table 3. Males (n=61) comprised 89.7% of the participants. Females (n=7) comprised the remaining 10.3 percent of the participants.

Table 3. Gender of Program Participants

<b>Gender</b>	<b><u>n</u></b>	<b>%</b>
Male	61	89.7
Female	7	10.3
Total	68	100.0

Table 4 shows the marital status as reported by the participants. Forty-eight of the participants (70.6%) indicated that they were married, while the remaining 20 participants (29.4%) reported that they were single.

Table 4. Marital Status of Program Participants

<b><i>Marital Status</i></b>	<b><i><u>n</u></i></b>	<b><i>%</i></b>
Married	48	70.6
Single	20	29.4
Total	68	100.0

Table 5 describes the ethnicity of the participants as reported by the respondents. Participants were asked to check the box which best describes the ethnic group with which they identified themselves. The choices were African American / Black and Hispanic American / Latino / Mexican American. Of the 68 respondents, African Americans (n=18) comprised 26.5% and Hispanic Americans (n=60) comprised 73.5%.

Table 5. Ethnicity of Participants

<i><b>Ethnicity</b></i>	<i><b><u>n</u></b></i>	<i><b>%</b></i>
African American	18	26.5
Hispanic	60	73.5
Total	68	100.0

Educational level is another factor used to describe participants in the program. This is outlined in Table 6. While educational attainment levels varied from less than an 8<sup>th</sup> grade education to the completion of graduate school, a majority of the participants at the least completed high school. One participant (1.5%) had an educational level of 8<sup>th</sup> grade or less. Eight participants (11.8%) completed some high school but did not graduate and 4 participants (5.9%) had a GED. Twenty-six of the participants (38.2%) completed high school. Eleven participants (16.2%) completed some college or trade school training and 4 participants (5.9%) completed their training programs. Several of the participants were college graduates. Five participants (7.4%) completed an associate degree, 7 participants (10.3%) completed a bachelor degree and 2 participants (2.9%) had graduate or professional degrees.



Table 6. Highest Educational Attainment by Participants

<b><i>Level of Education</i></b>	<b><i><u>n</u></i></b>	<b><i>%</i></b>
8 <sup>th</sup> Grade or less	1	1.5
Some High School	8	11.8
GED	4	5.9
High School	26	38.2
Some College / Training	11	16.2
Completed Training	4	5.9
Associate Degree	5	7.4
Bachelor Degree	7	10.3
Graduate Degree	2	2.9
Total	68	100.1*

\*Number not equal to 100 due to rounding

Farm sizes varied among participants in the Small Farmer Outreach Training and Technical Assistance Program as indicated in Table 7. Farm size ranged from less than 10 acres to more than 100 acres. Table 7 outlines the farm sizes as reported by program participants. While 30 percent of the participants (n=21) indicated that their farming operations were 26-50 acres in size, 4.4 percent of the participants (n=3) indicated that their farms were less than 10 acres in size and 14.7 percent of the participants (n=10) had farms in the 10-25 acres range. Of the remaining farms, 19.1 percent of farms (n=13)

were between 51 and 75 acres, 23.5 percent of the farms (n=16) were between 76 and 100 acres and 7.4 percent of the farms (n=5) had 101 or more acres.

Table 7. Size of Farming Operation

<i>Farm Size in Acres</i>	<i><u>n</u></i>	<i>%</i>
0-9	3	4.4
10-25	10	14.7
26-50	21	30.9
51-75	13	19.1
76-100	16	23.5
101-250	5	7.4
251 or greater	0	0
Total	68	100.0

Total household income including sources from both on-farm and off-farm are outlined in Table 8. Five participants (7.4%) had household incomes of less than \$25,000. Thirty-eight of the participants (55.9%) had household incomes in the \$25,000 to \$49,999 range. Twenty-three participants (33.8%) had household incomes in the \$75,000 to \$99,999 range. Only one participant indicated that the total household income was \$100,000 or greater.

Farmers were asked to give a self description as to what type of farmer

they considered themselves. Table 9 indicates how the farmers categorized their farming operations. Seventeen participants (25%) considered themselves as full-time farmers, 48 participants (70.6%) indicated that they were part-time farmers, and the remaining three participants (4.4%) considered themselves hobby or recreational farmers.

Table 8. Total Household Income

<b><i>Household Income</i></b>	<b><i><u>n</u></i></b>	<b><i>%</i></b>
\$0 - \$24,999	5	7.4
\$25,000 - \$49,999	38	55.9
\$50,000 - \$74,999	23	33.8
\$75,000 - \$99,999	1	1.5
\$100,000 or greater	1	1.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Table 9. Self Description of Type of Farmer

<b><i>Type of Farmer</i></b>	<b><i><u>n</u></i></b>	<b><i>%</i></b>
Full-Time	17	25
Part-Time	48	70.6
Hobby/ Recreational	3	4.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>100.0</b>

### Findings Related to Question 2

Question 2 was to identify characteristics of participants in the small farmer outreach training and technical assistance program as related to farm operations and record keeping.

Table 10 provides insight on the number of small farmer outreach training and assistance participants who had a farm plan. Of the 68 respondents, 50 participants (73.5%) stated said that they had a farm plan. The remaining 18 participants (26.5%) did not have a farm plan.

Table 10. Participants with Farm Plans

<i><b>Farm Plans</b></i>	<i><b><u>n</u></b></i>	<i><b>%</b></i>
Yes	50	73.5
No	18	26.5
Total	68	100

Table 11 outlines what agency or group assisted the small farmer outreach training and assistance participants to develop their farm plans. Of the 50 farmers with farm plans, 3 participants (6%) received assistance from USDA, 36 participants (72%) received assistance from Cooperative Extension, and 8 participants (16%) received assistance from a financial planner. The remaining 3 participants (6%) received assistance from other sources.

Table 11. Help with the Development of Farm Plans

<i>Plan Developer</i>	<i><u>n</u></i>	<i>%</i>
USDA	3	6.0
Cooperative Extension	36	72.0
Financial Planner	8	16.0
Other	3	6.0
Total	50	100.0

Table 12 outlines the number of paid employees other than family members on each farm. A majority of the farmers (44.1%) indicated that there were no paid employees on the farm. Of the farms with paid employees, 35.3% indicated that they had 1-2 employees, and 19.1% indicated that they had 3-5 employees. Only 1 farmer (1.5%) indicated that there were more than 5 paid employees working.

The types of record keeping systems being used by participants are indicated in Table 13. Of the 68 responses, only 1 participant (1.5%) indicated that he or she did not have a record keeping system. Of the remaining participants, 60.3% used a paper based system, 23.5% used a computer based system and 14.7 participants used a combination system of paper and computer.

Table 12. Number of Paid Employees on Participant Farms

<b><i>Number</i></b>	<b><i><u>n</u></i></b>	<b><i>%</i></b>
0	30	44.1
1-2	24	35.3
3-5	13	19.1
5 or more	1	1.5
Total	68	100.0

Table 13. Record Keeping Systems Used by Program Participants

<b><i>Types of Systems</i></b>	<b><i><u>n</u></i></b>	<b><i>%</i></b>
No record keeping system	1	1.5
Paper based system	41	60.3
Computer based system	16	23.5
Combination system	10	14.7
Total	68	100.0

Table 14 outlines the length of time in years that the participants had been using their current record keeping systems. Participants using their current record keeping system for less than a year comprised 1.5% of the population. A total of 38.2% of the population had been using their current system for 1-2 years, 35.3% of the population had been using their current systems for 3-4

years and the remaining 25% had been using their current system for 5 years or more.

Table 14. Length of Time Using Record Keeping System

<i><b>Time in Years</b></i>	<i><b><u>n</u></b></i>	<i><b>%</b></i>
Less than 1 year	1	1.5
1-2 years	26	38.2
3-4 years	24	35.3
5 or more	14	25.0
Total	68	100.0

### **Findings Related to Question 3**

Question 3 was to identify the characteristics of participation in the small farmer outreach training and technical assistance program as related to program participation. Program participation was not limited to the particular program. It could include other Cooperative Extension functions as well as other producer type organizations.

The length of time that participants had been involved with the small farmer outreach training and technical assistance program is outlined in Table 15. Three participants (4.4%) indicated that they had been involved with the program for less than a year. Twenty-eight participants (41.2%) had been involved with the program for 1-2 years and 34 participants (50%) had been involved for 3-4 years. The remaining 3 participants (4.4%) had been a part of the program for 5 years or more.

The number of small farmer outreach training and technical assistance program clients who participated in additional programs offered by Cooperative Extension is outlined in Table 16. Of the 68 responses, 39 participants (57.45) indicated that they participated in other programs offered by Cooperative Extension. Twenty-nine participants (42.6%) stated that they did not participate in any other programs offered by Cooperative Extension.



Table 15. Length of Time as a Program Participant

<b><i>Time in Years</i></b>	<b><i><u>n</u></i></b>	<b><i>%</i></b>
Less than 1 year	3	4.4
1-2 years	28	41.2
3-4 years	34	50.0
5 years or more	3	4.4
Total	68	100.0

Table 16. Participation in Additional Programs Offered by Cooperative Extension

<b><i>Program Participation</i></b>	<b><i><u>n</u></i></b>	<b><i>%</i></b>
Yes	39	57.4
No	29	42.6
Total	68	100.0

The number of farmers who participated in producers groups is outlined in Table 17. Twenty-three farmers (33.8%) indicated that they participated in producers groups. Forty-five farmers (66.2%) indicated that they did not participate in producer groups.

Table 17. Farmers Who Participated in Producer Groups

<b><i>Producer Groups</i></b>	<b><i><u>n</u></i></b>	<b><i>%</i></b>
Yes	23	33.8
No	45	66.2
Total	68	100.0

Table 18 is a comparison of involvement in producers groups by farmers before and after participating in the small farmer outreach training and technical assistance program. A paired t-test was used to examine the change in levels of involvement. Although not statistically significantly different, some practical significance was noted for producer groups. Producer group participation changed from approximately 1 group per participant to 1.5 groups per participant. One group showed a statistically significant increase in membership after the program. Respondents participated in advisory groups more often following training. The other two producer groups which had some practical increase were cooperatives/coalitions and community based organizations.

Table 18. Comparison of Farmers' Involvement in Producer Groups prior to and Since Participating in the Program ( $\alpha = .10$ )

<i><b>Producer Groups</b></i>	<i><b>Prior</b></i>	<i><b>Mean Since</b></i>	<i><b>Change</b></i>	<i><b>Probability</b></i>
Cooperative / Coalitions	.000	.087	.087	.162
Breed Associations	.174	.174	----	.000
Community Based Organizations	.783	.913	.130	.083*
Advisory Committees	.087	.348	.261	.011*
Other	.000	.000	----	.000
Total	1.04	1.52	.480	.001

\* significant difference

### **Findings Related to Question 4**

The purpose of Question 4 was to examine the changes in the farming operation resulting from participation in the small farmer outreach training and technical assistance program in relation to financial assistance, technical assistance, the process of obtaining a loan, and the success rate in the acquisition of farm loans.

Participants were asked whether or not they felt better informed about where to find financial and technical assistance as a result of participating in the Small Farmer Outreach Training and Technical Assistance Program. Table 19 outlines the responses. Of the 68 participants, 97.1% (n=66) indicated that they felt better informed. Only 2 participants (2.9%) did not feel better informed.

Participants were asked if they understood the process of obtaining a loan through USDA prior to participating in the Small Farmer Outreach Training and Technical Assistance Program. Table 20 shows the responses of the participants. Of the 68 participants, 22.1% (n=15) indicated that they already understood the loan process prior to participating in the program. The remaining 77.9% of the participants (n=53) did not understand the process before participating in the program.

Table 19. Participants Who Felt Better Informed about Where to Find Financial and Technical Assistance

<i><b>Producers</b></i>	<i><b><u>n</u></b></i>	<i><b>%</b></i>
Better Informed	66	97.1
Not Better Informed	2	2.9
Total	68	100

Table 20. Participants Who Understood the Process of Obtaining a Loan through USDA prior to Participating in the Program

<i><b>Producers</b></i>	<i><b><u>n</u></b></i>	<i><b>%</b></i>
Understood the Process	15	22.1
Did not understand the process	53	77.9
Total	68	100.0

Participants were asked whether they felt better informed about the process of applying for a loan since participating in the Small Farmer Outreach Training and Technical Assistance Program. Table 21 shows that 65 participants (95.6%) indicated that they felt better informed about the process. The remaining 3 participants (4.4%) did not feel better informed.

Table 21. Participants who Felt Better Informed about the Process of Applying for a Loan after Participating in the Program

<i><b>Producers</b></i>	<i><b><u>n</u></b></i>	<i><b>%</b></i>
Understood the Process	65	95.6
Did Not Understand the Process	3	4.4
Total	68	100.0

One of the objectives of the Small Farmer Outreach Training and Technical Assistance Program is to assist agricultural producers in applying for loans through USDA. Participants were asked if they had applied for loans both prior to and after participating in the program. If so, they were asked to report the number of times that they were approved and the number of times that they were denied both before and after participating in the program. A paired t-test was used to compare the means in both cases. Table 22 indicates that there was a statistically significant increase in the number of applicants who applied for loans. In fact, all participants had applied for a loan at least once since participating in the program. The increase in loan approvals and the decrease in loan denials also were statistically significant. Participants were 1.15 times more likely to be approved and 1.3 times less likely to be denied.

Table 22. Changes in Loan Approval and Denials as a Result of Participating in the Program ( $\alpha = .10$ )

<i>USDA Loans</i>	<i>Mean</i>		<i>Change</i>	<i>Probability</i>
	<i>Prior</i>	<i>Since</i>		
Participants Applied	.667	1.00	.333	.000*
Participants Approved	1.02	2.17	1.15	.021*
Participants Denied	1.68	.146	-1.53	.000*

\*significant at .10

Participants were asked to rank the five services provided by the program which had been of the greatest benefit to them. Table 23 indicates that participants felt that loan package assistance was the greatest benefit. Sixty percent of the participants ranked loan packaging first and 17.6% ranked it second. Of the remaining 4 categories, technical assistance was second, farm management and marketing was ranked third, record keeping was ranked fourth and farm plan development was ranked fifth.

Table 23. Ranking of Services Provided by the Small Farmer Outreach Training and Technical Assistance Program

<b><i>Program Service</i></b>	<b><i>Mean</i></b>	<b><i>Standard Deviation</i></b>
Record Keeping	3.44	1.38
Loan Package Development	1.83	1.25
Technical Assistance	2.92	1.33
Farm Management/Marketing	3.27	1.09
Farm Plan Development	3.51	1.33



## **CHAPTER V**

### **SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **Summary**

Small scale farmers are finding it difficult to survive in today's competitive market. The number of small scale farms, particularly those owned by farmers of color, continues to decline and the production of agricultural products has become increasingly concentrated (Economic Research Service, 1998). In 1982, the United States Commission on Civil Rights published a report stating that assistance provided by the United States Department of Agriculture throughout the country had often been denied to farmers of color resulting in tragic consequences for family farmers and their communities (Pennick & Gray, 2000).

The Cooperative Extension Program at Prairie View A&M University was awarded funds to establish the Small Farmer Outreach Training and Technical Assistance Program. This program was designed to slow down and/or reverse the number of socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers leaving agriculture. This program was a result of the passage of what is known as the Minority Farmers Rights Act. Funding originally was authorized in the 1990 Farm Bill, Title XXV, and Section 2501 of the Food, Agriculture, Conservation and Trade Act. Land-grant universities receiving these funds agreed to hire personnel to work one-on-one with limited-resource producers and to provide intensive training in agricultural production and financial management.

With the passage and implementation of this legislation, Prairie View A&M University was able to implement a comprehensive, technical assistance program to help farmers develop a holistic approach to farming that helps make farming more profitable and improves the quality of life for entire communities. The FSA entered into this cooperative agreement designed to provide intensive training in production and financial management to farmers of color. According to the terms of the agreement, the university hired Extension personnel to provide one-on-one and group farm management training. These Extension agents visited program participants three times a month to provide individualized training in custom farm plans, production and marketing practices, and record keeping. Overall, the objectives of the program were to enhance the ability of minority and small farmers and ranchers to operate farming or ranching enterprises independently, and produce income adequate to service debt, maintain farm operations and provide a reasonable life style.

The purpose of this study was to examine the effectiveness of the small farmer outreach training and technical assistance programs as related to farmers of color. The items evaluated included financial considerations, educational effectiveness, leadership and access to other resources. Some of the factors included the acquisitions of farms, the size of the farms, and the acquisition of loans, the level of involvement in community activities, successes, failures, and future plans.

The following research questions were identified to accomplish the

purposes of the study:

1. What are the demographic characteristics of the farmers based upon age, gender, marital status, ethnicity and level of education?
2. What are the characteristics of participants in the small farmer outreach training and technical assistance program as related to farm operations and record keeping?
3. What are the changes in community activities as a result of participating in the small farmer outreach training and technical assistance program?
4. What are the changes in the farming operation in terms of financial assistance, technical assistance, the process of obtaining a loan and the success rate in the acquisition of farm loans as a result of participation in the small farmer outreach training and technical assistance program?

The sample population for this study was small scale agricultural producers representing two ethnic groups: African Americans and Hispanics located in Cameron, Hidalgo, Starr and Willacy Counties and enrolled in the Small Farmer Outreach Training and Technical Assistance Program (N=68) between October 1, 2001, and September 30, 2004. A total of 89 survey instruments were mailed the program participants. Sixty-eight surveys instruments were completed and returned. The return rate was 76.4%.

The ethnic breakdown of the participants consisted of African American

(n=18) and Hispanic (n=60). The percentage breakdown of the participants was African American (26.5%) and Hispanic (73.5%).

Data were collected from participants enrolled in the Small Farmer Outreach Training and Technical Assistance Program through a written survey designed by the researcher. The survey instrument consisted of 35 questions and was divided into four parts. The survey included a participant profile, a farm profile, information on farm management and record keeping and information on program participation.

Part 1 of the survey was a participant profile to gather demographic information concerning size, scale and financial condition of the farm. Although Part I focused mainly on demographic data, it also sought to obtain the personal characteristics of the program participants. The respondents were asked to check the appropriate answer in the space provided. The characteristics investigated in Part 1 of the survey included the county in which the participant farms/ranches and/or resides, the participant's age, ethnicity, sex, marital status and educational level.

Part II of the survey was a farm profile consisting of 12 questions. Questions sought insight on farm size, land ownership and acquisition, total household income, percentage of income from farming, farming status and the number of farm employees. Additionally, information was gathered on farm planning, assistance with farm planning and the enterprises grown on the farm.

Part III of the survey focused on the farm financial records of participants.

The questions sought information on the person(s) keeping farm records, the type of record keeping system being used and the length of time that the farmer had been using that particular system.

The final section of the survey was designed to gather information concerning program participation. The questions asked the length of time the participant had been involved in this program, what types of educational programs and events the producer attended, groups with which the participant was involved and the farmer's leadership activities in organizations and the community. Other questions sought to gather information concerning sources of financial and technical assistance, loan application through the USDA and participant benefits from the program. Lastly, the participants were able to list ways in which the project could be improved.

The participants' names and addresses were obtained from the Extension agent conducting the program in the targeted counties. The list contained every agricultural producer in the targeted counties in which the Extension agent assisted with farm financial management and/or loan package development. A cover letter, the instrument (printed double-sided using a 12 point font on 8.5" x 11" paper), and a postage paid envelope were mailed to the targeted population on February 7, 2005. A follow-up letter was mail on February 25, 2005, to participants who had not responded to the survey.

Of the original 89 survey instruments mailed, a total of 68 (76.4%) were completed and returned by participants over a 5 week period. Of the remaining

21 surveys, 8 were returned because of incorrect addresses.

Descriptive statistics were used for reporting personal characteristics of the participants, as well as to determine knowledge gained and effectiveness of the Small Farmer Outreach Training and Technical Assistance Program.

Statistical Package for the Social Sciences® (SPSS) was used to calculate frequencies, percentages and variability of the variables.

Selected questions in the survey measured knowledge both prior to participating in the program and after participating in the program. The differences between the two scores were tested for statistical significance using the Paired t-test procedure using a null hypothesis that difference in score is equal to zero. For this research, a probability of .10 or less was considered statistically significant. With a paired score, a computed t-value and associated probability of .10 or less was used to detect a statistically significant difference.

### **Conclusions**

The conclusions of this study are based on the major findings from data collected and analyzed in this investigation.

The results of this study supports the theory that the evaluation of public programs has shown that programs targeting specific groups have been effective and that the effectiveness of outreach education programs can be determined best by the participants' adoption of practices outlined in the program (Blank, 1997). Based on the findings, the Small Farmer Outreach

Training and Technical Assistance Program is an effective educational program in teaching farm management techniques and assisting with the acquisition of financial resources. This overall conclusion supports research by Axxin & Axxin, 1997; Boone, 1985; Guy, 1999; Merriam & Caffarella, 1999; Seevers et al., 1997, who found that report success of incorporation of “social context into program planning.”

Participants in the program were most likely to be between the ages of 35 and 64 years old. Only 12 of the farmers (17.7%) were over the age of 65 years old and 8 of the farmers (11.8%) were under the age of 35 years old. The nationally, 25% of the farmers are over the age of 65 years old and only 5% of farmers are under the age of 35 years old (National Agricultural Statistics Service, 1997).

Participants in the program were more likely to be male. Males made up almost 90% of the target group. Just over 10% were female. This finding and the following data supports the work of Merriam & Caffarella (1999) who stated that an understanding of demographics is important in educational programming.

Participants in the program were more likely to be married than single. Of the participants, 70.6% were married. The ethnic identity of program participants was more likely to be Hispanic than African American. It is important to note that Hispanics made up the largest ethnic group in the selected counties.

The majority of the population (80.8%) had at least a high school

education. Only 19.2% of the population had less than a high school education. Farm size varied among participants but, on average, farm size for the participant was small. Of the 68 participants, half of the participants had 50 acres or less, and 19.1 percent had less than 25 acres.

Total household income for participants (including on and off farm income by the farmer and his or her spouse) was less than \$50,000. Of the 68 participants, 63.3 percent reported total household incomes of less than \$50,000 and 7.4 percent indicated that total household income was less than \$25,000. This supports Berton (2004) who noted that innovative methods should be used for “small and limited resource farmers.”

Participants in the program were most likely to be part time farmers. Only 25 percent of the participants considered themselves to be full time farmers. Of the remaining farmers, 70.6 percent considered themselves as part time farmers and 4.4 percent called themselves hobby or recreational farmers.

It was highly likely that participants had a farm plan. A total of 73.5% of the participants reported having a farm plan, and 72% of these participants indicated that Cooperative Extension had assisted them in the development of the plan.

Participants in the program were likely to provide their own labor on the farm. Of the 68 participants, 44.1% (n=30) indicated that there were no paid employees on the farm. Of the remaining 38 participants, 35.3% (n=24) indicated that there were only 1-2 paid employees.



The probability that program participants would have a farm record keeping system was high. One participant (1.5%) indicated that there was not a record keeping system for the farm. The remaining 67 participants (98.5%) had either a paper-based record keeping system, a computerized record keeping system or a record keeping system that combined the two. It was highly likely that the participants (60.3) had been using the current record keeping system for 3 years or more.

The length of time that participants had been involved in the program varied from less than 1 year to more than 5 years. The number who had been participating in the program for 2 years or less (45.6%) was relatively equal to the number who had been participating for 3 years or more (54.4%).

Participants in the Small Farmer Outreach Training and Technical Assistance Program were likely to participate in other programs offered by Cooperative Extension. A total of 57.4% of the participants indicated that they participated in additional programs offered by Cooperative Extension.

Participation in the program did not ensure greater participation in additional producers groups. While there was some increase in the amount of participation in producers groups after participating in the program, the increase was not statistically significant. The areas that showed significant increases were in participation in advisory committees and community based organizations. Program participants were more informed about where to find financial and technical assistance after participating in the program. Sixty-six of

the participants (97.1%) indicated that they felt better informed.

Farmers were more likely to understand the process of obtaining a loan after participating in the program. Prior to participating in the program, only 22.1% of the participants (n=15) indicated that they understood the process. Afterwards, 95% of the participants (n=65) indicated that they felt more informed. Farmers who participated in the program were more likely to be approved for a loan through USDA. Participant approval rates increased while denial rates decreased. Participants in Small Farmer Outreach Training and Technical Assistance Program viewed loan package development as the greatest benefit of the program. Sixty percent of the participants indicated that it was of the greatest benefit.

### **Recommendations for Actions**

The following recommendations for actions and future research are presented based on the major findings and conclusions of this study:

Because the Small Farmer Outreach Training and Technical Assistance Program resulted in positive results for limited resource agricultural producers, the program should be continued and expanded. The USDA should continue to fund this and similar programs addressing farmers of color. This is important since this group has “been consistently denied access to many services, provided with inferior services when served, and segregated in federally financed agricultural programs whose task was to raise their standards” (U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, 1965, p. 100).

A variety of teaching methods were used to reach and assist the small scale agricultural producers in the program. These methods along with continued hands on demonstrations should be used to continue assisting these producers. In line with past research documented in Chapter II, the program should continue to employ educators with a sensitivity to the socioeconomic culture of the participants.

Results of the evaluation of the Small Farmer Outreach Training and Technical Assistance Programs indicated that the farmers who participated in the program were more likely to have their loan applications approved. The one-on-one consultations that were used to assist these producers should continue. This conclusion is supportive of Merriam & Caffarella’s (1999) call for non-formal

education plans.

Because of the age of participants in the Small Farmer Outreach Training and Technical Assistance Program, the researcher recommends adding a section to the program that deals with estate planning. Nationally, 25% of the farmers are over the age of 65 years old (National Agricultural Statistic Service, 1997).

Because of the declining number of farms and the increasing incidences of land loss among farmers of color, the researcher recommends that the program works closely with community based organizations focused on these issues in an effort to serve the producers better. The result of this study showed a significant difference in the number of participants participating in advisory committees and community based organizations. Also, the Federation of Southern Cooperatives, a community based organization focused on land retention among farmers of color has identified seven common causes of African American land loss. They include heir property ownership, lack of estate planning, tax sales, partition sales, voluntary sales, land exploitation, and the inaccessibility to legal counsel (Thomas, Pennick, & Gray, 2004).

### **Recommendations for Future Research**

This study sought to evaluate the effectiveness of the Small Farmer Outreach Training Program for farmers of color. The results of the study show that the program was effective in the selected counties. Further research should survey other counties in which the Small Farmer Outreach Training Program is implemented.

Future studies may seek to compare the effectiveness of the Small Farmer Outreach Training and Technical Assistance Program based on ethnic breakdowns of all socially disadvantaged groups including women, African American, Asian American, Hispanics, Pacific Islanders and Native Americans. Outreach and Assistance Programs are conducted in several states in the South. Further research should seek to compare the results of the Small Farmer Outreach Training and Technical Assistance Program in Texas with other states with similar programs.

Future studies may involve a comparison of majority farmers and farmers of color after experiencing the same types of outreach activities as provided by the Small Farmer Outreach Training and Technical Assistance Program. Additionally, continuing to follow this group of small scale farmers to determine the long term effects of the program and the changes that occur among program participants.

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## APPENDIX A

### CONSENT FORM

An Evaluation of the Small Farmer Outreach Training and  
Technical Assistance Program for Farmers of Color in Texas

1. Nelson Daniels, a graduate student at Texas A&M University, is conducting a study of the effectiveness of the Small Farmer Outreach Training and Technical Assistance program offered by the Cooperative Extension Program of Prairie View A&M University. I have been asked to participate in this study. If I choose to participate, I will be asked to complete a survey with an Extension staff member.
2. These surveys will be conducted with approximately 100 small farmers recipients in four Texas counties. The survey can be completed in 20 minutes.
3. Personal information collected will be kept confidential. Completed surveys will be stored at the Cooperative Extension headquarters at Prairie View A&M University.
4. Whether or not I choose to participate in the study will not affect the way I will be treated as a participant in the Small Farmer Outreach Training and Technical Assistant program.
5. I will not receive any monetary compensation for completing this survey and there are no personal benefits.
6. I can ask a question at any time and I can refuse to answer any question on the survey.
7. There is no risk to me as a participant in this survey.
8. I will receive a copy of this consent form.

I, \_\_\_\_\_, understand what the study is about and I agree to participate in the study.

Participant Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Extension Staff Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**This research study has been reviewed by the Institutional Review Board-Human Subjects in Research, Texas A&M University. For research related problems or questions regarding subjects' rights, I can contact the Institutional Review Board through Dr. Michael W. Buckley, Director of Research Compliance, Office of the Vice President for Research (979) 845-8585 ([mwbuckley@tamu.edu](mailto:mwbuckley@tamu.edu)).**

A copy of this consent form has been read and given to me.

For further information regarding this study, please contact:

Nelson Daniels  
Cooperative Extension Program  
PVAMU – Prairie View, TX 77446  
936-857-2518

Dr. Alvin Larke, Jr.  
Dept. Agricultural Education  
TAMU – College Station, TX 77843  
979-862-3008

**APPENDIX B**

P.O. Box 3059  
Prairie View, TX 77446  
February 7, 2005

Dear Agricultural Producer,

We are conducting research to evaluate the effectiveness of the Small Farmer Outreach Training and Technical Assistance Program which is being conducted across the Rio Grande Valley. You are receiving this letter because you have been assisted by Extension Agent Vidal Saenz with a Farm Service Administration (FSA) loan package while participating in the program. We hope that the findings from this study will assist the Cooperative Extension Program to assist farmers better across the state. Your participation in this study will be most helpful in achieving this goal.

Please take a few minutes to respond to the items on the enclosed questionnaire. You should be able to complete the questionnaire in 15-20 minutes. Once you have completed the questionnaire, please return it in the enclosed postage paid envelope. Your responses will be anonymous, and your name will not be associated with your responses.

We appreciate your help in this effort. Your response is very important to the Cooperative Extension Program. It will help to provide for the future direction of the Small Farmer Outreach Training and Technical Assistance Program in Texas. Thank you for your assistance.

Sincerely,

Nelson Daniels  
Researcher & Interim Program Leader-Ag  
Cooperative Extension Program  
Prairie View A&M University  
Prairie View, Texas  
n-daniels@tamu.edu  
936-857-2518

**APPENDIX C**

P.O. Box 3059  
Prairie View, TX 77446  
February 25, 2005

Dear Agricultural Producer,

On February 7, 2005, you were mailed a questionnaire designed to evaluate the effectiveness of the Small Farmer Outreach Training and Technical Assistance Program which is being conducted across the Rio Grande Valley. You were sent the questionnaire because Extension Agent Vidal Saenz assisted you with an agricultural loan package.

Your input is vital to the success of this study. If you have returned your completed questionnaire, we appreciate your assistance. If you have not had the time to complete the questionnaire, please take a few minutes to do so, and return your completed questionnaire in the postage paid envelope by March 7, 2005.

We hope that the findings from this study will enable the Cooperative Extension Program to better assist farmers like you. You should be able to complete the questionnaire in less than 20 minutes. Your responses will be confidential, and your name will not be associated with your responses.

Thank you for your time and assistance in this important research study.

Sincerely,

Nelson Daniels  
Researcher & Interim Program Leader-Ag  
Cooperative Extension Program  
Prairie View A&M University  
Prairie View, Texas  
n-daniels@tamu.edu  
936-857-2518

## APPENDIX D

Please complete the following survey questions. The information gathered from this survey will be used to help evaluate the Small Farmer Outreach Training and Technical Assistance Program.

### PARTICIPANT PROFILE

1. In which county do you reside/farm/ranch?
  - Cameron
  - Hidalgo
  - Starr
  - Willacy
  
2. Which age category best describes you?
  - 0 - 24
  - 25 - 34
  - 35 - 44
  - 45 - 54
  - 55 - 64
  - 65 - 74
  - 75 or greater
  
3. Are you?
  - Male
  - Female
  
4. Are you?
  - Married
  - Single
  
5. Which category best describes your ethnicity?
  - African American / Black
  - Hispanic American / Latino / Mexican American
  
6. What is the highest level of education completed?
  - 8<sup>th</sup> grade education or less
  - Some high school, but did not finish
  - GED
  - Completed high school
  - Some college, vocational or technical school training
  - Completed vocational or technical school training
  - Completed 2 year associated degree
  - Completed a bachelor's degree
  - Completed graduate or professional



**FARM PROFILE**

7. Which category best describes the size of your farming operation?
- 0 - 9 acres
  - 10 - 25 acres
  - 26 - 50 acres
  - 51 - 75 acres
  - 76 - 100 acres
  - 101 - 250 acres
  - 251 acres or greater
8. What best describes the ownership for the acres that you farm? (check all that apply)
- own
  - rent
  - family land holding
9. How did you acquire your land? (check all that apply)
- inherited from family member
  - purchased
  - gift from family member or another person
10. Which category best describes your total household income?
- \$ 0 - \$24,999
  - \$25,000 - \$49,999
  - \$50,000 - \$74,999
  - \$75,000 - \$99,999
  - \$100,000 or greater
11. What percentage of total income comes from farming?
- 1 - 24
  - 25 - 49
  - 50 - 74
  - 75 - 99
  - 100
12. Which category best describes you as a farmer?
- full time farmer
  - part time farmer
  - hobby/recreational farmer
13. Which family members have employment other than on the farm? (check all that apply)
- farmer
  - spouse
  - children
  - none
14. Who performs the daily functions of the farm? (check all that apply)
- farmer
  - spouse
  - children
  - employees
  - other (please list) \_\_\_\_\_

15. Do you have a farm plan?  
 Yes How long have you had this plan? \_\_\_\_\_  
 No (Skip to question number 17)
16. Who helped you develop your farm plan?  
 USDA personnel  
 Cooperative Extension employee  
 Financial Planner / Consultant  
 other \_\_\_\_\_
17. Total number of paid employees (farm workers excluding immediate family members)  
 0  
 1 - 2  
 3 - 5  
 5 or greater
18. What enterprises are raised on your farm? (check all that apply)  
 livestock  
 forages  
 field crops (such as corn, sorghum and cotton)  
 vegetables  
 other \_\_\_\_\_

### **FARM RECORD KEEPING**

19. Who maintains the farm financial records? (check all that apply)  
 farmer  
 spouse  
 children  
 employees  
 other (please list) \_\_\_\_\_
20. What type of record keeping system do you currently use? (check all that apply)  
 no record keeping system  
 paper based system  
 computer based system Please list the type of software: \_\_\_\_\_  
 combination of paper and computer
21. How long have you been using this record keeping system?  
 0 - 11 months  
 1 - 2 years  
 3 - 4 years  
 5 years or greater

### **PROGRAM PARTICIPATION**

22. How long have you been a participant in the Small Farmer Outreach Training and Technical Assistance Program?  
 0 - 11 months  
 1 - 2 years  
 3 - 4 years  
 5 years or greater

23. Do you participate in any additional programs offered by Cooperative Extension?

<input type="checkbox"/> Yes (check all that apply from the list below)	<input type="checkbox"/> No (check all that apply from the list below)
<input type="checkbox"/> short courses	<input type="checkbox"/> time (too busy)
<input type="checkbox"/> field days	<input type="checkbox"/> don't feel included
<input type="checkbox"/> advisory committees	<input type="checkbox"/> doesn't meet current needs
<input type="checkbox"/> other _____	<input type="checkbox"/> other _____

24. Do you belong to any producer groups?

- yes (continue to Question 25)  
 no (skip to Question 27)

25. What producer groups do you belong to?

<u>Prior</u> to participating in the program (check all that apply from the list below)	<u>Since</u> participating in this program (check all that apply from the list below)
<input type="checkbox"/> Cooperative / Coalition	<input type="checkbox"/> Cooperative / Coalition
<input type="checkbox"/> Breed Association	<input type="checkbox"/> Breed Association
<input type="checkbox"/> Community Based Organization	<input type="checkbox"/> Community Based Organization
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural Committees	<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural Committees
<input type="checkbox"/> other _____	<input type="checkbox"/> other _____

26. Do you hold an office in any of the groups listed above?

- yes  
 no

27. Have you worked with your Extension agent to conduct applied research test on your farm?

- yes  
 no

28. Do you share information / educational materials obtained from Cooperative Extension with other farmers in your community?

- yes  
 no

29. Where do you go to get financial and technical assistance for your farm?

<u>Prior</u> to participating in the program (check all that apply from the list below)	<u>Since</u> participating in this program (check all that apply from the list below)
<input type="checkbox"/> Cooperative Extension	<input type="checkbox"/> Cooperative Extension
<input type="checkbox"/> USDA	<input type="checkbox"/> USDA
<input type="checkbox"/> Private consultant	<input type="checkbox"/> Private consultant
<input type="checkbox"/> other farmers	<input type="checkbox"/> other farmers
<input type="checkbox"/> other _____	<input type="checkbox"/> other _____

30. As a result of participating in the Small Farmer Outreach Training and Technical Assistance Program, do you feel better informed about where to find financial and technical assistance?

- yes
- no

31. Have you applied for a loan through USDA?

<u>Prior</u> to participating in the program	<u>Since</u> participating in this program
<input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no
If yes: Number of times approved _____	If yes: Number of times approved _____
Number of times denied _____	Number of times denied _____

32. Prior to participating in the Small Farmer Outreach Training and Technical Assistance Program, did you understand the process of obtaining a farm loan through the USDA?

- yes
- no

33. Do you feel better informed about the process of applying for a loan since participating in the Small Farmer Outreach Training and Technical Assistance Program?

- yes
- no

34. What has been the greatest of benefits participating in the Small Farmer Outreach Training and Technical Assistance Program?

Please rank from 1-5 with 1 being of the greatest benefit and 5 being of least benefit.

- 1. \_\_\_\_\_ record keeping
- 2. \_\_\_\_\_ loan package development
- 3. \_\_\_\_\_ technical assistance (advise on raising crops and/or livestock)
- 4. \_\_\_\_\_ farm management and marketing
- 5. \_\_\_\_\_ farm plan development

35. What are some of the ways in which the Small Farmer Outreach Training and Technical Assistance Program can be improved?

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**VITA**

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