Professionals as Participants in their own Training for Work with Latino Farmers

Cambio de Colores 2008
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Overview
2-year project
Kansas and Iowa
Two phases
Funded by NC-SARE

Participating organizations
- Extension (county directors and field specialists)
- NRCS (outreach director and district conservationist)
- RC&D (regional directors)
- NGOs (Iowa Network for Community Agriculture, Practical Farmers of Iowa)
- New Iowans Center
- Farm Services Agency

Assumption:
The population of Latino farmers will continue to expand. Thus, the need for agricultural professionals to engage this population will continue to grow. There is a gap in knowledge and experience among agricultural professionals in working with Latino farm families in their local food systems. We designed this project to address that gap.
Goals for participants:

- Increased awareness
  - of Latinos as valued members of the community and as current/future farmers
  - of opportunities in local food systems
- Improved knowledge and skills
  - in engaging Latino audiences with culturally appropriate educational programs
  - in assessing, analyzing and gaining resources for local food production systems
- Ability to integrate knowledge and skills to develop a strategy for sustained support programs

Baseline survey:

- Administered prior to first workshop session
- 35 respondents

Highlights:

- Language is the most commonly perceived barrier by participants
- Participants have rich and varied professional and personal experience with Latinos; participants seek opportunities for ongoing interaction
- However, they see few or no existing links between their organizations and Latino farmers

Baseline survey highlight:

1. Language difference perceived as significant challenge

   - 74% of participants do NOT speak Spanish
   - 77% would take Spanish classes given the opportunity
   - More than 60% listed language as a challenge to engaging Latinos in outreach/education programs
   - 69% do NOT think Latino producers typically understand English well enough to read and understand printed material
   - However, 83% said their organization provides printed information in a language other than English
   - 43% said their organization provides interpreters/translators when needed

Baseline survey highlight:

2. Participants have varied professional and personal intercultural experience

   - 89% have traveled internationally
   - 83% have interacted with Latino community on work-related issue/s
   - 51% served on team/committee with Latinos
   - 43% developed program tailored to Latino community needs/interests
   - 31% co-developed program for Latinos with Latino committee members
   - Personal interactions with Latinos involve: church, school, having Latino family friends and neighbors, travel to Latin America
Baseline survey highlight:

3. Participants’ see little or no existing interaction between Latino farmers and agricultural organizations

- 100% believe Latino farmers do NOT have knowledge of Extension, USDA or IDALS
- 100% believe Latino farmers do NOT participate in government or university events related to agriculture
- 92% believe Latino farmers do NOT typically request information and assistance from agricultural (government) agencies
- However, 14% have provided training or consultation with Latinos on farming or production issues

Participants’ motivations to reach out to Latinos

- Latinos are part of our community
- Organization’s mission is to provide information and services to all
- Opportunity to learn from Latinos
- Expand the agricultural community
- Expand the organization (Extension and NRCS)
- Economic development
- Create welcoming environment

Workshop Series

- September: Multicultural training
- October: experiential reflection
- November: local food system
- December: Latino business network-Ottumwa
- February: access to land and credit
- March: value-chain and small scale meat processing-Columbus Junction
- April and May: participant project planning-Marshalltown
- June: community garden early harvest gathering social event-Osceola

December: Ottumwa Latino Business Network Visit

- Byron Leu, Extension Livestock Field Specialist, Jefferson County: plans to develop a meat goat coop and processing facility
- Network member and taquería owner Jose Angel on his business and interest in opening a carnicería and stocking fresh Mexican-style meats
Visit to Panadería López to ask about their experience supplying local stores vs. shipping pastries out of town.

Luncheon discussion at La Juquilita with Network Member David Osorio, interpreter and recycling business owner (below). After lunch dialogue with La Juquilita Owner Rafael Ochoa, who also runs a grocery store.

Columbus Junction Meat Value-Chain Workshop (March 2008)

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

- To learn about what’s going on with meat goat producers, processors, distributors, and buyers in SE Iowa, and how these parts fit together in a local/regional value (supply) chain
- To gain a better understanding of the situation of locker plants in Iowa and their critical role in sustainable, diversified agriculture
- To explore the role of Latino producers, processors, and restaurant or tienda owners in the value chain, and the characteristics and extent of demand for goat meat in the Latino market
- To identify opportunities for new links and partnerships in SE Iowa

Participant projects:

- Use informal networking to identify and meet Latino farmers in central Iowa
- Conduct listening sessions to identify basic needs of Latinos in Lenox
- Develop Latino Business Network in Waterloo
- Explore development of indoor Mexican-style marketplace for food and other vendors
Lessons/observations:

- Participants want to hear from Latinos about how organizations can build trust in the community
- Participants want to work collaboratively
- Simple, step-by-step assignments help facilitate participant engagement in the ideas addressed in the workshop (like experiential homework assignment)
- Core group of 8 participants very engaged, with peripheral participation among the rest

Marshalltown Farmer Entrepreneurship and Networking

- Marshalltown Community College Entrepreneurial and Diversified Agriculture and farmer incubation program
- Growing Food and Profit
- The Raíces Project and el Colectivo