

Agricultural Systems
Planning & Program Evaluation Logic Model (2009-2013)

Brief Program Summary

Extension education in Agricultural Systems occurs in other program areas within UA Extension. For example, in the areas of livestock and horticultural production, program components deal with production, economics, and environmental issues. Yet these same educational needs occur in smaller scale production units that may be described as alternative, niche, organic, locally-grown, or sustainable agriculture. This program documents and supports educational efforts focusing on smaller scale production.

The Alternative Agricultural System program educates producers about non-traditional practices with the potential for providing supplemental income to their farming operation. Sometimes alternative enterprises become the primary family income once an understanding of business management and profitability is achieved. This program promotes sustainable management practices for alternative enterprises. It requires input and collaboration from experts in diverse fields such as animal and plant sciences, forestry, natural resources, agriculture policy and law, and agricultural economics and marketing. Examples of alternative enterprises are organic vegetable and fruit production, bees, tomatoes, grass-fed beef, pen-raised game birds, pine straw, shiitake mushrooms, herb production, small livestock (e.g., goats, rabbits, backyard poultry), and wildlife-recreation/fee fishing enterprises. Landowners are provided information about alternative agricultural practices and are encouraged to design a business plan as a decision-making tool for determining whether to invest in its establishment.

Research indicates only 1% to 5% of those who attend workshops about establishing alternative enterprises actually establish one. The decision not to pursue an alternative agricultural enterprise is as meaningful as deciding to establish one. Potential losses of time and financial resources are averted. Educated participants are expected to make informed decisions about whether to start an alternative agricultural enterprise. Therefore long-term outcomes indicating only the number who successfully establish an enterprise do not accurately reflect program success.

ASSUMPTIONS

Current trends indicate declining numbers of full-time farms but an increase in part-time and alternative farms. These part-time and alternative agricultural producers continually seek new and innovative ways to generate farm income. Identifying niche markets and capitalizing on specialized agricultural opportunities is a matter of economic sustainability and cultural survival for many agricultural producers.

Extension is strategically placed for agricultural education through access to experts and researchers in diverse fields throughout the University of Arkansas System, including research facilities specifically aimed at small and alternative production systems. Educational programs addressing community perceptions and concerns, in concert with the transfer of agricultural system information and technology, are critical in order to support landowner planning and implementation of alternative production systems that enhance the economic viability of the community. Those who are just getting started are actively seeking information and oftentimes represent a new audience of Extension clientele.

Inputs Resources & Activities	If, then	Methods	If, then	Target Audience(s) Participation	If, then	Short-Term Impact	Medium-Term Impact	If, then	Long-Term Impact
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Educational meetings Tours Field days Workshops One-on-one consultations including farm visits and telephone responses Articles, newsletters and media interviews in publications targeting agricultural producers and private landowners Demonstrations Web-based information 	➔	<p>Direct Methods</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrations Group Discussion Workshop Education Class One-on-One Intervention <p>Indirect Methods</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Newsletters Other 1 (Publications/Fact Sheets) Web sites 	➔	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agricultural producers Consultants/ certifiers Non-farm private landowners Governmental Agency Personnel Sales & service providers General public 	➔	<p>Indicators:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> # of clientele who reported knowledge gained # of Peer Reviewed Publications 	<p>Indicators:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Acres of alternative crops planted. # of clientele who initiated an alternative enterprise, as self reported 	➔	<p>Indicators:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Value of alternative agricultural products sold (\$1000) # of farms selling alternative agricultural products or services, such as farmer markets and wildlife enterprises

EXTERNAL INFLUENCES



Data Collection Plan:

- Who? (will collect data & enter into AIMS or AES Survey)
- How? (survey method/instrument?)
- When? (When will the data be collected & entered?)