

# Strategies to Improve Farm and Business Efficiency Through Integrated Communication

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National Institute of Food and Agriculture



## ❖ Institutions/organizations involved:

Collaborating partners on the project include Southern University Agricultural Research and Extension programs, communications and technology services, urban forestry program, the Center for Rural and Small Business Development; Louisiana Farm Bureau; farm associations; and the Southwest Center for Rural Initiatives.

## ❖ NIFA/USDA PRIORITY AREA:

Rural Communities for 21st Century

## ❖ USDA COLLABORATORS:

Rural Development

## ❖ BENEFICIARIES

This project targets 100 limited-resource producers and entrepreneurs in 10 rural Louisiana counties - Avoyelles, East Feliciana, Evangeline, Iberia, Point Coupee, St. Helena, St. Landry, St. Martin, Tangipahoa, and Vermillion. Currently, over 20 participants in six counties benefit from the project.



Figure 1-Louisiana County Map

## ❖ OBJECTIVES

The primary objective of this project is to strengthen the capacity of the SU Ag Center communication apparatus for packaging, refining and disseminating research information through innovative Extension methods and evaluating the effect of new media on quality of life indicators among limited-resource producers and entrepreneurs in Louisiana. Specific objectives of this proposed project are:

- To identify demographics of limited-resource farmers and entrepreneurs participating in the project in selected 10 of the 34 Louisiana counties served by the SU Ag Center.
- To identify current sources of information available to limited-resource farmers and entrepreneurs participating in the project.
- To identify limited-resource farmers' and entrepreneurs' preferences for methods of receiving information.
- To increase the frequency of limited-resource groups' access to information by developing a multi-media information delivery method based on their stated preferences.

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## ❖ ACTIVITIES

1. Developed survey instrument to collect data from participants.
2. Recruited over 20 participants from six of the 10 select counties.
3. Conducted focus group meetings in each county with follow-up after six months
4. Produced and distributed the same information in print, CD and DVD to each participant.
5. Collected, analyzed and reported data on demographics and preferred method of information delivery.
6. Purchased and installed Web Content Management System to feed timely information to participants and other clients.



## ❖ EVALUATION

1. An evaluation was conducted to test the effectiveness of the model after six months
2. Participants reported that they have increased awareness of USDA programs
3. An evaluation revealed that participants are aware of SU Ag Center Extension services
4. Participant evaluation showed they are already sharing new information with other farmers and entrepreneurs
5. Evaluation is continuous

## ❖ EXPECTED IMPACT

Participants will be able to:

- Identify USDA, SU Ag Center programs and other sources of information
- Identify preferred methods of receiving information
- Make informed, timely decisions; increase profit margin; and improve quality of life.

### For further information

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