

## **Youth Farm Safety Education and Certification (YFSEC) Competitive Grants Program**

### **Stakeholder Listening Session Summary of Stakeholder's Input**

In winter 2012, stakeholder's input was requested on the YFSEC program in order to help NIFA leadership address stakeholder needs and assure that YFSEC addresses the highest priorities authorized under this program. Stakeholder's input was gathered in two ways: 1) via a public listening session, held as a webinar, on December 12, 2012; and 2) via written comments, which were accepted by email and regular mail until close of business on December 26, 2012.

The purpose of the listening session and written comments was to gather stakeholder input on program focus and priorities for agricultural safety and health education. NIFA suggested the following core questions be addressed in drafting comments on the program:

1. What are the current educational gaps in agricultural safety and health education that could be addressed through this program?
2. What are the critical components of a coordinated approach to Agricultural Safety and Health Education?
3. Is there a need for a one-stop-shop for education and program materials in agricultural safety and health?
4. What educational standards should be considered in development of the curriculum?
5. What can be done to improve educational outreach to vulnerable populations, such as non-English speaking and immigrant youth, in agricultural jobs?
6. What partners would be beneficial to engage in developing a more comprehensive and effective agricultural health and safety curriculum for youth?
7. What educational approaches, such as use of social media, could be used to get the message out, both more effectively and to a larger number of young workers?

NIFA received a large number of comments from a relatively small number of stakeholders – 22 – that represented a range of scientific societies, colleges and universities, other research organizations, and individuals. Six stakeholders provided comments during the webinar only, 12 provided comments via email, and 4 stakeholders provided feedback both during the webinar and via email. Comments revealed a wide range of awareness and acknowledgement of what has and has not already been done in the area of agricultural safety and health. The listening session identified some important gaps and NIFA is committed to addressing those gaps as funding and partnerships evolve.

In general, stakeholders commented that national leadership for youth farm safety and education is needed and they congratulated NIFA for its focus on youth farm safety education and certification. Stakeholders acknowledged that adults are responsible for the safety of youth and young workers. In addition, they emphasized the critical role adults have in designing and implementing youth farm safety education that is comprehensive, accessible and effective. Stakeholders expressed concern over the lack of comprehensive educational and training curricula and told NIFA that there is a need for a youth farm safety curriculum that is ecologically sound, developmentally appropriate, time relevant (meaning that it addresses safety-

issues stemming out of new, intensified agricultural technologies and practices), that exceeds the minimum requirements of the current Agricultural Hazardous Occupations Order (AgHOs) and reflects current approaches in pedagogy and knowledge of youth-related injuries in agriculture. Similarly, stakeholders remarked that there is a need for evaluation tools that go beyond standardized testing and reliably assess gains in students' knowledge, skills, behavior, and readiness to perform agricultural work.

While most stakeholders felt that creating a centralized source for educational and training materials would be helpful, some also advised that any such effort should not seek to take place of locally-based education and training programs successful in addressing unique needs of local farming communities.

In regards to development of a national farm safety curriculum, stakeholders felt that a variety of educational standards, sources and programs ought to be consulted – such as, for example, the Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources (AFNR) curriculum standards developed by the National Council for Agricultural Education, the Common Group Technical Core Standards by the National Association of State Directors, common core standards developed by the National Governors Association and the Council of State School Officers, the National Quality Program Standards for Secondary (Grades 9-12) Agricultural Education, health and safety training programs by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) and the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) – as well as resources available through Penn State Cooperative Extension, Purdue University, and state farm bureaus.

In regards to improving educational outreach to vulnerable populations, stakeholders indicated there is a need for: a) a national youth farm safety curriculum that is available in multiple languages (especially Spanish) and formats; b) a resource and training delivery system that is reasonably accessible to the majority of the target population nationwide; c) effective train-the-trainer materials; and d) partnership strategies effective in engaging the migrant workforce. As related to partnerships, stakeholders felt it beneficial to implement a comprehensive youth farm safety curriculum to explore coordinated collaborations with associations, schools, and organizations that are implementing safety programs, as well as partnerships with parents, health community/educators, farm worker organizations, local farm/ranch organizations, Cooperative Extension, Future Farmers of America, agricultural equipment manufacturers, commodity groups, farm organizations, the NIOSH-funded Agricultural Safety and Health Centers, the U.S. Department of Labor, National 4-H, and ASHCA.

Stakeholders acknowledged the crucial role that the Internet, social media, and youth engagement with social media could play in supporting outreach for and dissemination of national youth farm safety training and education. However, stakeholders also commented that in order to reach remote areas of country, where electronic delivery might be limited or unavailable, training and education materials should be made available in print form as well.

All comments relevant to the YFSEC program area, including an official transcript of the listening session, will be available on the [NIFA website](http://www.nifa.usda.gov/nea/ag_systems/in_focus/ag_yfsec_stakeholder.html) for 6 months at [http://www.nifa.usda.gov/nea/ag\\_systems/in\\_focus/ag\\_yfsec\\_stakeholder.html](http://www.nifa.usda.gov/nea/ag_systems/in_focus/ag_yfsec_stakeholder.html). Stakeholder input

received from the listening session and via written comments was taken into consideration during development of the FY 2013 program guidelines for the YFSEC program area.