1.1 Agricultural and Horticultural Business Vitality FY10

Brief Summary of Program

Agriculture, horticulture, and related business vitality work is critical to the land grant mission. Cornell University has a commitment to the farm and agricultural/horticultural business industries of New York State and to assist key decision makers in making the best choices in managing their farms or agriculturally related businesses. Research and educational programs help business owners improve productivity and sustainability through resource management, adoption of new technologies and practices, improved marketing strategies and business management skills and by looking to alternative enterprises. Farmers and horticulturalists utilize research-based knowledge to continue producing a stable, safe and affordable food supply and horticultural products in economically and environmentally sustainable ways.

Situation and Priorities Statement

Agricultural and food industries contribute an estimated $30 billion a year to New York State's economy. Non-food horticultural businesses contribute a significant amount in addition to the numbers listed. The absolute size of New York State's agriculture, as measured by real sales of agricultural products, has increased modestly over the last 20 years. Declines in meat livestock have been offset by small increases in the dairy industry resulting in relatively constant livestock sales. However, increases in vegetables, oil seed and horticulture crop sales have raised the total level of crop production.

The total number of people employed in agriculture has been relatively stable with some modest increases in recent years. Structural change has resulted in increased numbers of agricultural service jobs as specialized service firms now conduct a number of the functions that used to be done by the farmers themselves. 37,000 farms use almost 25% of the State's land area or 7.6 million acres. The land and farm buildings owned by New York farmers are valued at over $12 billion. Nearly 2,600 horticultural businesses used over 25,800 acres, plus more than 31 million square feet of greenhouse space.

Although there is every reason to believe that the dairy industry, the largest agricultural enterprise, will remain competitive and continue as the dominant industry in New York State, the vegetable and ornamental horticulture industries are expanding, with the horticulture industry showing nearly 50 percent growth since 1985. Nearness to the east coast urban areas provides demand for fresh quality fruits and vegetables and a wide variety of ornamental horticulture products.

The structural change taking place in much of New York agriculture, combined with expansion in the vegetable and horticulture businesses, results in a vibrant industry with the potential for a strong future. However, to remain competitive that industry needs highly qualified new employees and research and outreach support on the continuing and emerging issues that rapid change engenders.

Assumptions

- Producers and horticultural business people often are not fully aware of the programs, contacts, and resources available to them to assist with business management/development needs.
- Many agricultural/horticultural business have opportunity to strengthen profitability through improved planning and management.
- There is opportunity for growth in the agricultural/horticultural sector through alternative, new, and value added enterprises which may not be apparent to existing business people or potential investors.
- The supply and effective management of labor resources is a key to the viability of agricultural and horticultural enterprises.

Target Audiences

Key audiences served, directly and indirectly, in enhancing agricultural and horticultural business viability include: Established producers; new and young producers, consultants and service providers, input suppliers, cooperative directors and managers, marketing firms, governmental agencies, lenders, and local/state/federal governmental leaders.
**Ultimate Goal(s) of the program**
- Long-term viability and well being of the agricultural/horticulture industry and rural communities in New York State.
- Economically and environmentally sound products and practices, and safer and healthier products.

**Note:** Only highlighted outcomes are collected in annual reporting.

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<tr>
<th>Outputs</th>
<th>Near-Term Outcomes</th>
<th>Mid-Term Outcomes</th>
<th>Long-Term Outcomes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1.1.1 Management Emphasis</strong></td>
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<td>(1.1.1a) # producers/horticulture business persons completing education programs on business management, finance, business planning and marketing, human resource management, risk management, production economics, and business transitions. (no target)</td>
<td>(1.1.1b) # participants demonstrating knowledge or skill gains related to improving business management, finance, business planning and marketing, human resource management, risk management, production economics, and business transitions. (no target)</td>
<td>(1.1.1c) # participants documented to have applied knowledge or skills gained to strengthen existing business operations. (2,500)</td>
<td>(1.1.1e) # participants reporting improved agricultural/horticultural business profitability attributed at least in part to program participation. (1,500)</td>
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<td><strong>1.1.2 Resources/Opportunities</strong></td>
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<td>(1.1.2a) # producers/horticulture business persons completing programs to expand profitability, develop marketing options, diversify or substitute alternative products or enterprises, and/or increase operational efficiencies. (no target)</td>
<td>(1.1.2b) # participants demonstrating knowledge or skill gains related to expanding profitability, develop marketing options, diversify or substitute alternative products or enterprises, and/or increase operational efficiencies to solve immediate concerns. (no target)</td>
<td>(1.1.2c) # participants documented to have initiated one or more alternative or expanded ventures. (100)</td>
<td>(1.1.2e) # of new food, horticultural, and agricultural businesses and/or new enterprises within existing businesses reported by program participants and attributed at least in part to program participation. (75)</td>
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<td><strong>1.1.3 Labor</strong></td>
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<td>(1.1.3a) # persons completing education programs on the labor needs of agriculture/horticulture businesses and and/or the needs of potential employees. (no target)</td>
<td>(1.1.3b) # participants who demonstrate knowledge gains related to needs of potential employees and/or availability of qualified employees. (no target)</td>
<td>(1.1.3c) # participants documented to have made one or more changes in human resources practices to enhance labor availability or retention. (1,000)</td>
<td>(1.1.3d) # producers/horticultural businesses reporting improved labor availability, performance, and/or retention of higher skilled and more valuable human resource team members attributed at least in part to program participation. (500)</td>
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