Final Evaluation Report
For Kentucky State University
College of Agriculture, Food Science, and Sustainable Systems
January 1, 2014 – December 31, 2015

Promoting Participation of Small Socially Disadvantaged Producers in USDA Programs, and Sustainable Ownership and Management of Farms in Kentucky

Project Director: Dr. Buddhi R. Gyawali

KSU demonstrates to Shelia Yates, a farmer in Jessamine County, how to plant strawberries using plastic culture.
(Photo by Edwin Chavous, September 26, 2016)

DECEMBER 2015

This document was submitted by GB Facilitation and Training Works to Kentucky State University College of Agriculture, Food Science, and Sustainable Systems Project USDA/SSDPG-01, and prepared by Gae Broadwater.
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Small farms are majority of farms throughout the Commonwealth of Kentucky and many of these are owned and or operated by small, socially disadvantaged producers. Farming operations of African Americans, women, and others who have historically been under-represented are in jeopardy of decline as agricultural enterprises. Many in these groups have not applied for or received assistance from USDA programs such as Natural Resources and Conservation Services (NRCS) and Rural Development (RD), due to a number of barriers and obstacles.

Kentucky State University (KSU), through its Land Grant Program and College of Agriculture, Food Science, and Sustainable Systems, has an established outreach and education program that has served the needs and interests of small, limited resource, and minority farmers for more than 20 years. For the past two years, KSU’s efforts have been enhanced, in large part, with a grant from USDA – Promoting Participation of Small Socially Disadvantaged Producers in USDA Programs, and Sustainable Ownership and Management of Farms in Kentucky.

By carrying out the planned tasks for the grant’s four major objectives, KSU identified small, social disadvantaged producers (SSDPs) in at least 45 Kentucky counties. Workshops and technical assistance introduced new opportunities for SSDPs to apply for USDA loans and grant programs. Alternative business models for production and marketing through cooperative enterprises were presented. SSDPs increased their interest in networking, planning, risk management, and other topics in support of stabilizing and sustaining their agricultural enterprises.

Partnerships with USDA and the Kentucky Center for Agricultural and Rural Development (KCARD) were strengthened and with expectations for increasing joint efforts. Interviews with partners indicate greater regard for the value of KSU in serving an audience at-risk of missing opportunities to bring much-needed financial assistance to Kentucky farms.

KSU has consistently and directly served under-served audience of small and minority farmers with reliable and in many cases, limited resources. The importance of this grant cannot be overstated. KSU is an effective organization to reduce and stop the loss of farm owned and operated by SSDPs in their outreach and education programs for SSDPs. More funding for KSU’s efforts would be an investment in Kentucky agriculture’s future.
INTRODUCTION

This final report reviews the activities, products, and outcomes resulting from a U. S. Dept. of Agriculture (USDA) grant, Promoting Participation of Small Socially Disadvantaged Producers in USDA Programs, and Sustainable Ownership and Management of Farms in Kentucky (aka SSDP), implemented by the College of Agriculture, Food Science, and Sustainable Systems (CAFSSS) at Kentucky State University (KSU).

KSU documented that small and socially disadvantaged producers (SSDPs) in Kentucky were not using and benefiting from USDA programs in support of their agricultural enterprises. The SSPD program was designed to increase participation of Kentucky SSDPs in USDA programs and provide need-based technical assistance to them. This was intended primarily to be accomplished through assistance to socially-disadvantaged groups in rural areas. In Kentucky, small and socially disadvantaged producers also are typically racial and ethnic minorities and women.

Kentucky State University was awarded this grant through a national competition and the only award received in Kentucky. The need for continuing with these awards was highlighted in an early 2015 press release:

> These grants will help socially-disadvantaged business owners develop the tools and skills they need to grow their enterprises and succeed at creating jobs and expanding economic opportunities in rural areas.

Tom Vilsack, Secretary
US Dept of Agriculture

REPORT PURPOSE

This final report highlights the project’s impacts, strengths, weaknesses, and potential measures to guide future program development for small and limited resource producers and their agricultural operations.

Through various means, the evaluator examined the extent to which KSU met the plan for four (4) updated activities outlined in the project proposal, January 1, 2015 – December 31, 2015. Those four updated objectives were:
1) Educate SSDPs about USDA programs for increasing their participation in the full range of USDA programs and services;
2) Facilitate SSDPs in registering and owning farms and farm ownership;
3) Provide training and outreach to SSDPs in developing cooperatives and networking and engaging in farm businesses; and
4) Provide one-on-one need-based technical assistance, education, and training in a wide range of farm planning production, processing, and farm and financial risk management strategies.

LIMITATIONS

This final evaluation may be limited in scope in that some data were not available at the time of this review.

REVIEW METHODS

As with the mid-term report conducted in 2014, a two-prong approach was implemented to review SSDP toward achieving its four objectives with an emphasis on qualitative assessments:

(1) Data Review – reports, forms, curricula, attendance records, website, photos, newspaper clippings, transcripts, and other data received and or observed.

(2) Interviews – a series of individual interviews were conducted with SSDP project participants, project partners, and KSU staff. Six (6) small farm producers from various districts were interviewed in person or via telephone (from Bourbon, Christian, Lincoln, Logan, Madison, and Todd counties). Four (4) USDA staff (regional and local staff) were contacted via telephone or through an online survey for feedback. Two (2) representatives of the Kentucky Center for Agriculture and Rural Development (KCARD) was interviewed, too. A total of nine (9) KSU CAFSSS personnel (Extension agents, program assistants, and graduate assistants; on-campus and field staff) with assignments affiliated with the SSDP Project were contacted and interviewed via in person or online.

Copies of the interview questions are included in the Appendix section of this report. Each interview was completed in person or via telephone call. Responses to these questions provided confirming information for the observations and findings in this report. All
comments included in this report from written surveys and personal interviews are published verbatim. No names are associated with the comments to protect the identity and confidentiality of the person contacted.

**Findings**

This final evaluation review focused on the extent to which the Project achieved its stated Work Plan and the revised four objectives during the final 12 months of this project. Key points that were addressed in the Mid-term Report are included here with updates on the status and related outcomes:

**Partner Engagement** – USDA (Rural Development (RD) and Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)) staff were key partners in conducting outreach programming. They visibly contributed to the educational programming and technical assistance offered to SSDPs. Another valuable partner in completing this project was KCARD (Kentucky Center for Rural Development). Faculty from the KSU School of Business were important contributors to delivering programs. It allowed them to see the nature of small scale agriculture, introduced them to the outreach accomplished by the KSU’s Small Farm Program, and workshop participants gained access to other KSU resources.

The KSU-USDA relationship was enhanced by this project and is this was evidenced by these comments from different USDA personnel:

- I wasn’t aware that KSU had such a program, and after meeting Dr. Gyawali and his staff, I am delighted in knowing about what they do and the services they offer.
- I am not originally from Kentucky and was not familiar with KSU. Meeting with them and learning they have Extension agents was very helpful to know.
- KSU helped us meet people and producers I would not have the opportunity to meet as easily.
- I was impressed that KSU can explain farming practices and support the producers with equipment loans on a limited basis. This helps SSDP farmers put new practices to work rather than it just being a “tell” activity. That makes to efforts more effective.

While KCARD works with producers from all vantages, they do work with the SSDP audience and consider small and socially disadvantaged producers a niche they are particularly suited to serve. Even though KCARD has worked statewide for several years, their interviewed representatives found benefit in the SSDP project, too.
SSDP individuals have been requesting assistance from us after the workshops—We gained much more exposure to the SSDP audience because of working with KSU.

Dr. Gyawali is most approachable and professional in facilitating the program, always a pleasure to work with. I hope this work can continue.

KSU’s outreach is much broader than I realized. They are really “out there” with their agents and reach. This will help us extend our efforts to the SSDP clients.

From these comments and observations, it is apparent that previously more informal or casual interactions with these partners have been strengthened. There is an expressed desire to continue working together to reach an underserved audience.

Staffing – Two vacant positions were filled by KSU that were instrumental in building on the momentum generated during the first year of this project. The Small Farm Program Assistant position housed on the KSU campus and the KSU Small Farm Extension Agent position assigned to the western Kentucky counties (housed in Christian County) were filled during 2015. This strengthened KSU’s ability to sustain its initial efforts achieved in Year One of the SSDP and were critical to expanding audience outreach and conducting programming.

Additional staffing is recommended and will be address later in this report.

Project Outreach – Numerous individual and group technical assistance, networking, and training activities occurred during the final twelve months of the SSDP. These activities focused on USDA financing and loan programs, business planning, cooperative market development, cost-sharing, networking, and specific topics such as energy, beekeeping, and pastured poultry, depending on the location and audience’s local interests.

Overall, workshops, forums, and farm visits were well-attended based on the sign-in sheets. Attendees were willing to drive up to 30-50 miles to attend. This lends support to the proposal for more regional events and will be addressed later in the recommendations.

During an interview with one producer, he noted that in the past, “farmers ‘like me’ would not be invited to meetings to learn about programs.” This disparity has been addressed to a great degree by USDA and through the efforts of programs such as KSU Small Farm Program. In the view of this producer, KSU has helped make changes so that he is now aware of more opportunities to learn about USDA programs. However, he is considered that all registered farmers are still not receiving notifications on a systematic basis and some are still being missed.
As was noted in the Staffing section previously, the employment of key staff by KSU enhanced efforts to reach and engage with the SSDP audience. This was evidenced by sign-in sheets that were systematically used to collect names, contact information, and demographic data such as race/ethnicity and gender of participants. Meeting agendas and participation feedback were collected at the various locations where educational programming was conducted. These indicated a variety in location, type of farming operation, diversity in ownership arrangements, and size of farm.

**Program Administration** – The SSDP program made significant strides in coordinating to reach its intended audience and providing technical assistance and educational workshops. This was accomplished with personnel and partners who were committed to the goals and objectives of SSDP. Because of KSU’s limited institutional support resources and competing priorities, the Project Director may have missed opportunities to expend the entire grant award. However, these funds were primarily allocated to Salary. The lag in KSU hiring procedures interfered with the ability to expend these funds and should not be a reflection on the administration of the grant program delivery. Available staff worked to their fullest once employed.

In partner interviews, a particular comment was made regarding a logistical issue. More than one individual representing partners indicated that it would be helpful for more advance notice of scheduled meetings and informational programs for their own calendars. This will be crucial when KSU begins to increase the number of programs it begins offering around the state.
CONCLUSIONS

Kentucky State University maintained and enhanced its record of outreach to small and socially disadvantaged farm producers. Substantial outreach with this audience was achieved because of the efforts of KSU personnel, their commitment to serving the needs of SSDPs, and the forging of stronger partnership relationships with USDA and KCARD. The comments provided are in support of their efforts to sustain the objectives of this program now that its funding has concluded.

Each objective is reviewed here in regards to the outcomes produced by the KSU grant plan along with photos that illustrate activities conducted throughout the project’s remaining year.

Objective 1: Educate SSDPs about USDA programs for increasing their participation in the full range of USDA programs and services.

- Task 1.1 Continue to identify and update the database of SSDPs.
- Task 1.2 Continue to organize workshops about USDA programs.

KSU organized multi-county meetings around the state for SSDPs with similar interests and needs based on the results of Needs Assessment Questionnaire administered in the first year of the project. These sessions were used to explain and promote USDA programs that could benefit the SSDPs. This is consistent with the recommendation that was provided in the Mid-term Report.

Feedback provided through workshop and conference evaluation forms indicated that participants generally rated these sessions as Good-Excellent. These comments exemplify the numerous comments provided by participants:
➢ So many programs are confusing but this workshop cleared things up. Thanks.
➢ All presentations were excellent.
➢ The farming that I was doing as a hobby will now go to the next level.

These comments were supported with interview feedback from KSU personnel:

➢ You would not believe the people who have told me they learned so much at the last workshop in Floyd County and they wanted their friends to hear it.
➢ The SSDPs were very receptive to the trainings and interaction... The foundation of trust appeared to be crucial in their decisions to expand and to continue their farming efforts. The discussion of applications to assist them and the introduction to representatives of financial assistance was [sic] something which they were needing as limited resource farmers. The implication that they were not alone and that there were people out there willing and able to help was a lift to their morale and confidence.

An unscientific review of sign-in sheets from four regional workshops and one statewide conference noted that 153 participants representing 45 Kentucky counties were reached by SSDP. (Another 48 participants from out-of-state locations were also recorded on the sign-in sheets. No representatives from state or federal government programs nor KSU were included in this assessment of the sign-in sheets.)

The 45 counties were analyzed for participation in clusters as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kentucky regional cluster / (# counties represented) (N=45)</th>
<th>% of participants on sign-in sheets (N=153)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Western (5)</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid-west Central (10)</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metro (3)</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern (4)</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid-Central (12)</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eastern (11)</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It appears to this reviewer that greater activity was realized in regions where KSU has full-time staff housed (Western, Mid-west Central, and Mid-Central).

A cursory examination of race and gender on the participant sign-in sheets indicated a good mix of White and Black participants and female and male participants. While there was some representation from other racial and ethnic groups, it was very limited.
The initial SSDP proposal submitted by KSU aimed to reach 150 producers in 41 counties for the entire duration of the project. This was accomplished in the second year of the project. Combined with the efforts of Year One, the KSU SSDP project exceeded its expectations.

KSU SSDP staff are completing an online (geo-location) map to help connect producers with similar interests and to share questions.

**Recommendations for future programming with SSDPs in support of Objective 1:**

- While the geo-location database will be useful for KSU, USDA, KCARD, and others, supplemental forms of outreach and connecting are needed based on comments from producers. Simple paper directories of contact information may be useful for many of these farmers.

- Continue conducting multi-county/regional meetings in areas for SSDPs with similar interests and needs (based on the results of Needs Assessment Questionnaire, feedback from workshop evaluations, and producer interviews) to explain and promote USDA programs. Conduct technical assistance training on an individual and group basis to assist SSDPs in using online programs that support their access to USDA programs.

- Boost coordination with stakeholders, partners, and similar projects and entities to increase outreach and options for SSDPs to gain access to information about USDA programs. KSU can position itself as the conduit to these audiences for other agencies and organizations.

- As budget allows, KSU should place additional staff for the small farm program in the areas of greater need with lesser participation, based on the analysis above and other feedback. For example, Eastern Kentucky could benefit from the additional of KSU staff who emphasize small-scale agricultural enterprises for small and limited resource producers.

- Offer workshops on how to use computer programs with agriculture functions, and how to file online applications that allow producers to connect for individual needs as well as promotion of their products, applying for USDA services, and registering their farms and conducting business.
Objective 2: Facilitate SSDPs in registering and owning farms and farmlands and farm ownership.

- Task 2.1 Assist SSDPs in apply for farm ownership, youth and housing loans.

This objective was modified to better suit the needs of SSDPs being reached. The Black Farmer lawsuits against USDA were addressed and settled previously through other channels; that element of the objective was no longer applicable to the needs of this situation and as such, deleted.

Applying for USDA loans and other financial support programs can be a daunting task. This program was developed to help overcome the barriers to acquiring these resources in support of SSDPs. However bureaucratic requirements of the application process are not the only barriers to access. Many SSDPs are still uncertain of the relevance of many of the grant and loan programs to their farming operations. Many are intimidated by the skill sets necessary to apply—recordkeeping, computer skills, and related communication skills. Here is what one SSDP shared in an interview:

> The process is complicated and there is a huge learning curve. I have an advanced degree and the registrations and paperwork are overwhelming. We need simple worksheets with step-by-step lists of things we need to do. There is an assumption that “everyone knows” and that just is not the case.

From another perspective, one of the KSU personnel interviewed noted that during the SSDP workshops, farmers were able to increase their knowledge base with USDA agencies. Here is one example shared:
One producer has purchased a farm as a result of being a participant of the SSDP Program, others have received Extension technical assistance with livestock i.e., pasture poultry, goats, cattle and county cost-share program. This KSU representative went on to add that programs like the . . .:

SSDP grant is still needed for our small producers here in Kentucky... One example, farmers are benefiting from the Rural Development home repair program. Another is Farm Service Agency, Ownership and operation-loan programs. There is still much work to be done please continue to support this SSDP Grant.

An SSDP interviewee responded:

I have learned so much about recordkeeping since I began working with KSU. I see now where that is going to help me be preparing to take advantage of USDA programs.

That is where KSU and its affiliates can fill a void for the SSDPs. There is a gap between their preparedness and the available programs. They are keenly aware of their limitations and know the kinds of assistance that is required to help them move forward. They just are not clear on how to gain access to the desired assistance. This came through in comments from other SSDPs:

I would like more technical assistance beyond validating my operations and practices. How can KSU take it to the next level?

KSU has been very helpful in our efforts to apply for an operating loan. What else can I do?

More detailed, step-by-step instructions are needed. Take it down to a basic level.

Numerous comments from SSDPs indicated they felt that USDA programs are for “big farmers.” This is a persistent comment and one that needs attention and further study. The SSDPs expressed concern that their operations are too simplistic and generate too little income to be of interest to many of the USDA programs and staff.

Recommendations for future programming with SSDPs in support of Objective 2:

- Develop simple worksheets and how-to guides for SSDPs to aid SSDPs in the process of registering and applying for USDA programs from start to finish.
Connect SSDPs with others who have successfully navigated systems and processes in their efforts to apply for USDA programs and other programs that will enhance their farming operations.

Consider an informal mentoring or pairing of SSDPs so they might share and support one another when a KSU agent or other resource person is not available.

Support KSU personnel in offering continued and expanded technical assistance to SSDPs.

Work with USDA to develop grant and loan programs that address the operational scale of small agricultural enterprises to make them more accessible. One option may be transitional programs that offer developmental stages to start, grow, and expand.
Objective 3: Provide training and outreach to SSDPs in developing cooperatives and networking and engaging in farm businesses.

- Task 3.1. Provide training on cooperative formation for production and marketing.
- Task 3.2. Promote knowledge and skills on value-added produce, direct marketing, and risk management.
- Task 3.3. Organize a field day to successful cooperative or farm enterprises managed by SSDPs.
- Task 3.4. Conduct farm planning and agribusiness/microenterprise training.

The KSU SSDP project conducted regional workshops and sponsored attendance of numerous SSDPs at state and regional conferences. These opportunities provided technical assistance, education, and networking opportunities. In every instance, the regional workshops included presentations on cooperative farm business operations, value-added production, marketing, and risk management, and supporting activities. Conferences included the SSAWG (Southern Sustainable Agriculture Working Group) Conference, KSU Small Limited Resource/Minority Farmers Conference, monthly Third Thursday Thing, and on-farm field trips.

Interviews with and feedback SSDPs indicated that forming cooperatives for production and marketing is a topic of future interest but that they are not ready to participate. This is a message that came through readily.

While interviews and workshop feedback indicated many positive comments, SSDPs also seem reluctant about pursuing cooperatives as an alternate model to enhance their production and marketing operations. As a result, producers expressed limited interest in pursuing a cooperative model. It appears the concept is still intimidating and requires further education. There is a limited history of success or perceived success with cooperatives throughout the state. Even in the early 2000’s, the concept of cooperatives was met with skepticism, even from some Extension agents.

Here are selected comments from a few of the interviewed SSDPs:
➢ At first I wasn’t into the idea. Now it makes more sense if I can get up and running.
➢ I am not really interested for my operation. I want to be on my own.
➢ I am interested but would like to see more how it could work.

With that said, one KCARD staffer reported that the KSU SSDP project allowed them to introduce the cooperative model to an audience that typically does not respond to public presentation about this approach. There was agreement among those interviewed from KCARD and producers that the cooperative model could be helpful but that the many SSDPs were not ready to take that step or risk. It is believed that given enough time and further explanation, the cooperative model could become attractive to SSDPs.

**Recommendations for future programming with SSDPs in support of Objective 3:**

- Expand the offering a variety farm visits and field days that allow SSDPs to share experiences and learn from each other.
- Increase access to materials developed for the SSDP audience such as fact sheets and newsletters based on the interests of SSDP individuals and their operational needs.
- Identify cooperative models that illustrate how limited resource farmers and SSDPs can be successful in a cooperative, including a transition process that minimizes risk for SSDPs. Plan site visits and listening sessions with SSDP producers who have successful experience using a cooperative model.
- Consider alternative ways to introduce the cooperative model with an emphasis on efficiency and profit. A different name other than “cooperative” may be advantageous, too.
Objective 4: Provide one-on-one need-based technical assistance, education, and training in a wide range of farm planning production, processing, and farm and financial risk management strategies.

- Task 4.1 Update a web-based education resource portal.
- Task 4.2 SSDP-to-SSDP counseling/mentoring program.
- Task 4.3 Provide personal assistance to SSDPs.

Because of its statewide reach, other eternal funding sources, and Extension agents and small farm assistants in the field, KSU was able to fulfill the overall aims of this objective. In the final 12 months of this project, the SSDP program supported producers through numerous strategies. These were highlighted in interviews with both KSU and USDA personnel:

- Having this grant help to open up channels in Eastern (mountains) of Kentucky.
- The SSDP grant has allowed the cooperator to grow & maintain product and to showcase that product at the local field days and meetings.
- I was able to demonstrate and educate small producers on the vaccines and appropriate locations to give the shots will help the animals to stay healthy and the consumers have a safe food supply.
- Small farmers need help with educational and equipment needs but don’t have the resources they need to expand their operations.
- We (USDA) reached so many more producers who can benefit from our programs by working with KSU.

Focus group sessions made it possible for SSDPs to interact with other producers or similar circumstances. These informal and formal networking sessions identified various issues and concerns. Notes of these sessions provided a place for SSDPs to express frustrations, state their needs and wants, seek in order to get financial and technical assistance, training, education, and engage in peer-networking for problem resolution.
These settings provided insights into issues of adopting new producer practices, trust among SSDPs toward university and government agencies, and taking risks in their agricultural enterprises.

The networking opportunities and field trips were rated very highly. Every one interviewed praised the field trips and on-farm demonstrations. Interviewed SSDPs stated:

- **The best way to understand is to see. Visiting the farms is very helpful. Reading is not always the best way to understand.**
- **I would really like to go on more visits. I appreciate seeing the ingenuity of other farmers.**

To support ongoing technical assistance for producers, the SSDP website was expanded. Materials and resources shared at the educational sessions can be tapped at any time by participants and others if they have reliable Internet access. The website can be located at this link: http://kysu.edu/academics/cafsss/grant-initatives/small-and-socially-disadvantaged-producers-grant/

Numerous producers did indicate that personal contact is still a desirable form of outreach. Others said they would appreciate newsletters, e-mails, and text messages. A limited few stated they would use a Facebook page for keeping up with others farmers and events. Another interviewee suggested that KSU go back to some of the “old-fashioned ways” of promoting events and services—leaving flyers at Tractor Supply, Southern States, garden supply operations, and similar locations.

In partner interviews, it was suggested that more advance notice was needed to promote meetings and programs to the intended audience. Additionally, one partner was concerned that some of the audience appeared to be “repeat” attendees. They indicated they would like to work together to find ways to expand audience reach so information could be shared effectively.

All interviewed said they appreciated the opportunity to learn from other farmers, including visits to farms where they are successfully using the techniques being demonstrated at the meetings and educational sessions.

One of the program participants echoed this sentiment during an interview:
We need more help like this from KSU. Many small farmers are not ready for these programs. These workshops and sessions help us learn how to grow and prepare for future opportunities. But we are not ready yet. KSU is the only one that will help us.

The efforts of the KSU SSDP program were summarized in this statement from one KSU staffer:

The SSDPs were very receptive to the trainings and interaction which occurred and expressed their appreciation that someone was trying to help them with their farming enterprises.

KSU SSDP staff are completing an online (geo-location) map to help connect producers with similar interests and to share questions.

**Recommendations for future programming with SSDPs in support of Objective 4:**

- Offer more options to communicate with SSDPs who are using texting or other forms of social media so they can have quicker access to information.

- Continue publishing and distributing a quarterly newsletter through the KSKU small farm program with a focus on the needs and interests of SSDPs. This would be an opportunity to feature SSDPs who have successfully applied for and received USDA funding, participated in cooperatives, and can provide other trusted recommendations and advice.

- Provide paper copies with electronic follow-up to increase response and participation. Make both paper and electronic copies available. Distribute paper copies to every Extension office throughout the state – this can be accomplished through the UK Extension mailroom distribution system. Additionally, build a distribution list that includes USDA, KCARD, and other relevant agencies and organizations.

- Develop and distribute a quarterly, semi-annual, or annual calendar of regional events using the same strategies listed above for the newsletter.

- Maintain and update the SSDP website to include new KSU personnel. Create an easy to remember web link using one of the web link abbreviators, such as Google UL Shortener (https://goo.gl), Tiny (tiny.cc), or bitly (https://bitly.com).
☐ Add links to the relevant USDA websites and resources of other partnering organizations for easy access by SSDPs.

☐ Provide an online submission link for questions/request for assistance button on the SSDP program website with auto direct so that KSU personnel are immediately notified to allow for quick response.

☐ Create a FAQ (Frequently Asked Question) page on the SSDP website to increase access to information.

☐ Keep all KSU small farm staff up-to-date with USDA program requirements over the long-term so can provide the appropriate technical assistance.

☐ Provide a secure online registration for the SSDPs to help build a database of their locations and contact information.

☐ Link geo-location information with relevant events and resources that will connect SSDPs in a timely manner so can take advantage of other activities, events, newsfeeds, markets, and even individuals who can support the growth and development of their farming operations.

☐ Continue offering workshops, field trips, and networking opportunities in the identified geographic regions. While the monthly Third Thursday Thing and annual Small, Minority, and Limited Resource Farmers Conference are tried and true venues, not ever SSDP can attend or connect in between events. Distance and travel are issues for many. Third Thursday Thing topics could be replicated in regional sites to expand reach to SSDPs. A workshop session at the annual conference could be designed to plan for quarterly events in districts or regions based on locality, which also might include a prioritization of topics and issues to be addressed at the regional meetings for the coming year. This would lend to more strategic decisions and planning as well as the development of the aforementioned calendar of events.

☐ Identify ways to engage with KSU resources to provide supplementary presentations in all areas beyond agriculture expertise from KSU, including the areas of youth development and family and consumer sciences.
CLOSING THOUGHTS

Through the process of compiling the data from the various sources and observations, it is apparent that the USDA award to KSU for the SSDP program was an important investment for Kentucky. While not ever objective was achieved to the fullest, the positive outcomes far outweigh any shortcomings for this project.

This grant has forged stronger partnerships among the service providers (KSU, USDA, KCARD), enhanced the perception of KSU in support of SSDPs, introduced USDA programs and services to a wider audience, and built capacity of KSU and USDA to serve a critical segment of Kentucky’s agricultural community. A project that generates more opportunities is one with positive outcomes. That is the overall accomplishment of the KSU SSDP project.
INTERVIEW RECORDING FORM - SSDP

Date: _____________________

Producer Name: _____________________________      County: ___________________

I. Introduce; Purpose of Interview; Confidentiality

II. Interview Questions

1. What types of USDA programs and services are you familiar with that support farmers? Which ones do you use?

   How did Kentucky State University help you learn about any of these programs?

2. Has KSU assisted you in any activities related to registering your farm or USDA loan programs? If you, how so?

3. What types of educational programs or activities have you attended in the past year that were conducted by KSU? What about USDA?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Did any of these cover these topics? (Y/N)</th>
<th>How interested are you in these topics (0=none; 5=very much)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Forming cooperatives for production &amp; marketing</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Knowledge and skills on value-added produce, direct marketing, and risk management</td>
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<tr>
<td>Field days; visit other farms using USDA and/or KSU programs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Farm planning and agribusiness/microenterprises</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

In the past year, would you say you have participated in programs with KSU more, less, or about the same?
4. Have any KSU staff provided you with one-on-one assistance for your farming operating? If so, how?

Have you used the SSDP web site for obtaining any resources?

Any counseling or mentor (in person, telephone, e-mail)?

Other types of assistance?

III. Closing Questions

Do you have any questions you want answered by KSU that I can pass on to the Small Farm Program?

What other types of assistance do you think KSU could provide to you to support your goals for your farming operation?

What would increase your participation in KSU Small Farm workshops and programs?

What would increase your participation in any of the USDA programs and services?

What is the best way to let other farmers know about KSU’s Small Farm Program? USDA?

IV. Thank you!
Questions posed to Extension personnel (agents and small farm assistants):

1. In what ways did the SSDP grant support your educational programming for SSDP's, i.e., what would you have not been able to accomplish without it?

2. What are the next steps needed to support SSDP's in connecting to USDA programs--how can participation in USDA programs be increased.

Questions posed to graduate assistants and support staff:

1. From your perspective and the role you played in the implementation of this grant, In what ways did the SSDP grant support activities for outreach for SSDP farmers, i.e., what did you see as the positive outcomes of this grant?

2. What are the next steps needed to support SSDP farmers in connecting to USDA programs--how can participation in USDA programs be increased?
INTRODUCTION

This brief (and confidential) survey asks you to reflect on your experience with the SSDP (Small, Socially Disadvantaged Producers) project that was implemented by KSU's College of Ag, Food Science, and Sustainable Systems (Dr. Buddhi Gyawali, program director) through a grant from USDA.

There are five (5) questions that you are asked to respond to in completing this survey. All appear on this one page. All comments will remain confidential and no names will be associated with feedback received. [For those taking survey online: You may type your responses into the comment boxes.]

Thank you.

(1) In what ways did the SSDP project with KSU support USDA's (and your) programming goals for working with small, social disadvantaged producers (SSDP's), i.e., what would you have not been able to accomplish without it?

(2) What do you know now that you didn't know before about KSU's resources and capacities to provide technical assistance and education to SSDP's?

(3) What are the barriers and opportunities in working with KSU to connect with and support SSDP's?

(4) What are the next steps needed to support SSDP's in connecting to USDA programs--what would you like to see done to increase participation in USDA

(5) Do you have any other comments, questions, or concerns you are willing to share?
Survey Questions to KCARD Staff – conducted via telephone.

INTRODUCTION
This brief (and confidential) survey asks you to reflect on your experience with the SSDP (Small, Socially Disadvantaged Producers) project that was implemented by KSU's College of Ag, Food Science, and Sustainable Systems (Dr. Buddhi Gyawali, program director) through a grant from USDA. All responses will remain confidential and no names will be associated with responses.

Thank you.

(1) From your experience and perspective, describe the relationship of KCARD with KSU prior to KSU receiving the SSDP grant.

(2) How does working with DDSPs fit into the mission and goals of KCARD?

(3) In what ways did the SSDP project with KSU support KCARD’s (and your) programming goals for working with small, social disadvantaged producers (SSDP's), i.e., what would you have not been able to accomplish without it?

(4) What did you learn about KSU’s resources and capacities to provide technical assistance and education to SSDP’s?

(5) What are the barriers and opportunities in working with KSU to connect with and support SSDP's?

(6) What are the next steps needed to support SSDP's in connecting to USDA programs--what would you like to see done to increase participation in USDA

(7) Do you have any other comments, questions, or concerns you are willing to share?