



WESTERN SARE SOUTHWEST SUBREGIONAL CONFERENCE

~June 10-11, 2008 ~
Best Western Rio Grande Inn
Albuquerque, New Mexico



11-20-08

Successful SW Conference Applicants

Three ag-support professionals with long experience in sustainable agriculture were the successful applicants for a Western SARE grant to conduct a Southwest Subregional Stakeholder Conference in Albuquerque June 10-11.

The three applicants are Dennis Lamm and Jim Dyer of Colorado and John Allen of Utah.

Lamm, a professor and extension specialist at Colorado State University, leadership to sustainable agriculture in Colorado and the Western region since 1988 and has served as Western SARE state Professional Development Program (PDP) Coordinator since 1994. Dyer is director of the Southwest Marketing Network based near the Four Corners area of Colorado and previously served as chair of the Western SARE Administrative Council. Allen, former director of the Western Rural Development Center and now a faculty member in sociology at Utah State University, has organized several training and conferences and conducted research on sustainable agriculture since 1990.



Jim Dyer



Dennis Lamm

has provided



John Allen



John Burton



Stephanie Walker



Rick Gibson



Bob Newhall



Jeanine Castillo

The Albuquerque conference planning team was ably assisted by Stephanie Walker, New Mexico State University Extension vegetables specialist and Western SARE state PDP coordinator for New Mexico, and her assistant, Jeanine Castillo, both of whom carried out the tasks of site selection and on-site preparation.

Rounding out the planning team were Western SARE state PDP coordinators from the region: Rick Gibson, University of Arizona agricultural extension agent for Pinal County and state coordinator since 1994; John Burton, assistant director for the University of Nevada Cooperative Extension and state coordinator since 2003; and Bob Newhall, a soil scientist at Utah State University, state coordinator since 1995 and Western SARE Deputy Coordinator since 1997.

Conference Strategies

The planning team proposed two two-day conferences, one for the Southwest subregion of the Western SARE region and the other for the High Plains subregion.

In discussions among regional stakeholders it was concluded that geographical differences and a variety of issues among the northern and southern states from Montana to New Mexico necessitated two conferences.

The subregions were generally divided into the Southwest: Arizona, New Mexico, Nevada and southern Colorado and Utah; and the High Plains: Montana, Wyoming and northern Utah and Colorado.

The dual conferences were designed to showcase Western SARE accomplishments, which might encourage producers and professionals to pursue Western SARE grants, and to provide a forum for stakeholders to identify and prioritize future training and research.

Target Audiences

Potential invitees included representatives from farming, ranching, non-governmental organizations, extension educators and leaders, other educational institutions that have established efforts like farm-to-school programs, sustainable agriculture curricula and internships and leaders from federal and state agencies that have partnered with Western SARE programs.

A special effort was to be made to target limited-resource farmers, ranchers and tribal and Hispanic stakeholders. With its experience in the Southwest, the Southwest Marketing

Network was to work with state SARE coordinators and other partners in each state to encourage participation, especially by Indian producers and service providers.

Conference Agenda

The conference was scheduled to open with a keynote speaker from the National SARE office, followed by a series of speakers familiar with the SARE program and its grants. Also planned for the opening day was a series of expert speakers from the subregion who would be asked to discuss important, relevant topics identified through surveys or environmental scans of farmers, ranchers and extension professionals. Potential topics include: urbanization and land-use planning; marketing and competing in domestic and world markets; water availability and quality; innovations in technology; alternative energy; biological weed control; and bio-security.

As a means of providing continuity for the Southwest Subregional Conference with other subregional conferences planned on behalf of Western SARE, Jerry Dewitt, director of the Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture in Ames, Iowa, and a former director of the National SARE Program, was to serve as moderator.



Jerry Dewitt

While the first day was designed to thoroughly acquaint conference participants with successful previously funded projects and provide ideas for potential future directions, the second day was designed to allow for brainstorming to identify future needs and priorities for possible SARE funding. Concurrent sessions would address the wide variety of needs and priorities facing Southwest agriculture. A facilitator would guide the discussion and a recorder would take detailed notes. A representative would then report on the discussion at each roundtable brainstorming session, and the whole group would identify the highest priorities from all of the lists. This would focus on identifying and prioritizing unmet and emerging research and education needs in sustainable food, fiber and energy systems.

Objectives and Outcomes

At the end of the conference, a mini proceedings was to be developed to highlight the discussion, and a written report compiled to summarize the results of brainstorming sessions as well as other feedback from participants.

In addition, a targeted request for applications, directed at conference participants, was to be issued that would allow applicants to address critical topics that arose during the conference.

“We believe this process will highlight possible collaborations among stakeholders and also identify ‘subregionally’ specific issues within the West,” said the grant application. “The report will be distributed widely...for use in shaping future requests for applications and to enhance the awareness of the impacts of Western SARE programs and projects.”