

SARE Sustainable Agriculture Curriculum and Continuing Education Program for Cooperative Extension Faculty and other Ag Professionals

2nd Conference Call: April 6, 2004

Participants: David Chaney, Kim Kroll, Vern Grubinger, Deborah Cavanaugh-Grant, Andy McGuire, Julie Sexton, Deborah Young

Agenda

10:00 Sub-contracts update

10:10 Vern's Outline Suggestion

10:15 Comp 1 Summary discussion. Any new topics to be added?

11:00 How are things coming on Competency 2? Any thing we need to change about the process so far?

11:15 Adjourn

The main objective for this meeting was to establish the scope of sub-topics to be addressed under the **Competency 1: Basic Principles / Concept Overview**. Dave will take feedback, input, decisions from this meeting and re-work the Competency 1 topics into the framework format previously discussed, and as outlined on the project Web site, in order to facilitate the next step—writing the learning outcomes for this competency (skills, behaviors, attitudes).

The group agreed that Vern Grubinger's outline was a good summary of what should be addressed under this Core Competency. His outline focused on six major themes:

1. Definitions of Sustainable Agriculture
2. Key Concepts, Context and Connections to Other Terms
3. History of the Sustainable Ag Movement
4. SARE
5. Sociology of Sustainable Agriculture
6. National Resources / Partners in Sustainable Ag

Discussion

1. Definitions of Sustainable Agriculture. No further discussion.

2. Key Concepts, Context and Connections to Other Terms. Lots of discussion on this sub-topic. Vern recommends a long list of all the embedded concepts that relate to sustainable agriculture with brief, paragraph or so, definitions of each. Discussion main points:

9 elements of SARE

- Should be included in the list of terms, but not defined as such.
- For the course, work on developing a visual that helps convey the many factors / indicators related to sustainability (e.g., staves of a barrel).
- Use Web to emphasize holistic, systems, integrative aspect of sustainability. Deborah C-G. uses the 9 elements of SARE poster in her Web-based training. Build on this.
- Service providers should be able to help clients assess the sustainability of their operation.

- In developing list of embedded terms and concepts, be clear and present in an organized fashion—
 - goals / principles (where we want to go)
 - means to the goals (how we get there)
 - programs or techniques that can be applied or used along the way

Organic

- Address organic in a general way... more than just one of the terms on the list of embedded concepts... but not so extensively that participants get impression that sustainable = organic. We need to be very clear that organic is a very specific sub-set of sustainable ag.
- CE service providers are confused about organic and this course should help them understand the landscape regarding this term.
- Highlight the divergent organic communities / clientele that are out there right now: those with a clear consumer-marketing niche focus and those in the more philosophical camp.
- Point to many excellent resources that are out there.

Preservation of rural communities

- Not necessarily integral to sustainable ag. Don't state as explicit goal. SARE emphasis is on quality of life, whether that be rural, urban, suburban.
- North Central SARE has an explicit goal of enhancing quality of *rural* life
- Note the larger societal influences on this component: consumer choices, food and ag policies, food industry scale and consolidation, ...
- Avoid terms like "preservation".. give wrong connotation. Instead use positive statements like strengthen well-being of farmers and ranchers, enhance the economic vitality, increase support for

Commodity / conventional ag concerns

- Do not set up or address in adversarial way, e.g., sustainable vs. conventional
- Note particular challenges / problems / issues with current 'conventional' commodity ag system, e.g., global consolidation and related factors and impacts of that trend.
- Ag professionals, CE faculty need to be very aware of the range of issues out there. We should acknowledge the confusion and conflict that currently exists in our food system(s) and the possible impacts of different trends on the ecology of farms and ranches, the economic viability of farm and ranch businesses, etc....
- Make use of the literature to emphasize different issues in this area. Ikerd has written extensively about this.
- [Note from Dave: Possibly use concept of '2 food systems' (corporate-vertically integrated vs. local-regional-direct)]

3. History of Sustainable Ag Movement

Legislative mandate is important to emphasize with this audience.

4. SARE

OK. No further discussion

5. Sociology of Sustainable Agriculture

- Look at this sub-topic here as a preview of Competency #4.... The people and relationships aspects of working in sustainable ag.
- Acknowledge CE mandate of delivering science-based information, but discuss limitations of this in addressing certain topics, issues, questions from clientele.

Misc.

- Throughout curriculum and course, remember to talk about farms and RANCHES.
- Include food security as one of the terms in the related concept list—focus on regional food supply and low-income component. Don't include food safety as a sustainable term/concept.
- **DO** address food safety as related to direct marketing under Core Competency 3.

To do:

Dave rework sub-topics into Competency 1 framework. Write some initial learning outcomes. Design team work on Competency 2 feedback. DUE TO DAVE BY APRIL 19TH.

Next conference call: May 5th?? Details TBA.

Summarized by David Chaney