

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

Conference Call: January 24, 2005

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

Agenda

1. Course module 1 writing update and timeline.
2. Finalizing framework. Comments on draft Web format and contents.
3. Framework / program evaluation and review.

Course module 1 writing

Draft schedule for completing framework, and writing and designing 1st module of online course is included at the end of this document. Design team approved timeline.

Finalizing framework

Group recommends that the Web version utilize Web capabilities for presentation. The Web page itself does not need to be printable. Create a PDF of the framework that people can link to for printing out. Dave will work with Brian and Julie to modify Web format to include an expandable outline approach. Two boxes at the bottom should also have a sentence before the bullet lists describing what they are.

Framework / program evaluation and review

Group reviewed the evaluation plan. A few minor comments—Dave will incorporate those changes into final draft. Discussed process for setting up and conducting the conference call focus groups:

1. Kim and Dave will work on letter that introduces/describes the project and invites people to participate in the call. Also will provide the necessary documents and links to be reviewed beforehand.
2. Kim will contact the regional coordinators and with them identify an AC rep from each region to participate. AC representation is important for future buy-in and commitment from SARE.
3. Regional reps to coordinate the conf. calls:
 - Dave: West
 - Vern: Northeast
 - Deborah Cavanaugh-Grant: North Central
 - Kim: South
4. Each rep above will be the facilitator for the conference call and be responsible for the following:
 - identify 3 other state coordinators to participate

- after getting AC rep name, communicate with all focus group participants (3 state coordinators, AC rep, regional PDP coordinator) to schedule the conf. call
- coordinate with Kim's calendar so he can also participate (NE and NC)
- once the date and time are determined, communicate that information to Kim so that national office can set up the call
- remind participants to review materials beforehand
- facilitate the discussion
- identify a note taker for the conf. call and make sure detailed notes are taken
- send detailed notes to Dave after the call

Framework evaluation and review plan is appended below.

Dave will contact the design team by Thursday, February 3rd to let them know when the earliest date would be for holding the conf call. The framework on the Web and the mock-up sample pages of the course need to be ready for focus group participants to take a look at before the conf. calls can be held.

Summarized by David Chaney

- Framework evaluation and review plan is appended below.
- Draft schedule for completing online course Module 1 and framework is appended below.

Curriculum Framework Evaluation/Review

General Outcomes

Outcome 1: New agents and other key agricultural professionals are more able and better equipped to advise their clientele and develop research and education programs in sustainable agriculture.

Outcome 2: States, SARE Regions and others are actively developing and implementing in-depth professional training using the framework as a guide, and building on the basics covered in a national online course.

The framework review is focused mainly on Outcome 2. The framework consists of 5 Core Topics, and for each topic, includes general learning outcomes/objectives for a national online course, followed by a list of essential sub-topics and subject matter areas in which ag professionals should become proficient as appropriate for their job assignment and responsibilities. Proficiency will be gained through participation in a national course and regional/state trainings that supplement the national course and explore essential topics in greater depth.

Does the framework cover all the essentials and provide the kind of guidance that's needed for enhancing PDP training efforts at the regional and state level? Do regional and state coordinators see how their activities can link to the national course?

Framework Review Process

Regional Focus Groups

4 conference calls (one for each region), 1 hour
facilitator-- , note taker—

participants: regional PDP coordinator, 3 selected state coordinators, one rep from administrative council

Process:

- identify / invite participants
- set date
- send descriptive letter of what we're trying to achieve and relevant documents and Web links: streamlined framework (hardcopy and/or Web version), project overview chart, project Web address, detailed outline for Module 1, link to prototype demo of online course
- participants expected to read through material ahead of time and think about questions posed
- hold conference call

After the conf. call:

- notes returned to Dave to compile
- Dave incorporates changes into framework

- After getting all the notes back, any points where there was confusion or disagreement bring back to curriculum design team to make final decision.

Questions for Focus Groups

Does the framework cover all the essential content areas in which Extension service providers should be proficient in order to be able to develop effective research and education programs in sustainable agriculture? (topics that should be dropped, other essential topics that should be added, applicability)

How would you see using the list/outline of essential topics? Is this a useful planning tool? Do you see using this to help prioritize training needs in your state / region?

How do you see plugging into this overall program? Would you see the opportunity to expand on the national course to develop in-depth, hands-on training?

Assuming the content is appropriate and covers all essential topics, is the Web format and presentation of the framework appropriate and user-friendly? How could it be improved?

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Process / Steps in Program Implementation

- Regional and state coordinators approve the framework and agree that the content covers all the essential areas/topics in which ag professionals should be proficient in order to effectively advise their clientele and develop research and education programs in sustainable agriculture; content is sufficient to set a good foundation on which others can build more in-depth training.
- Regional coordinators (and other SARE program personnel?) communicate/promote the framework to state coordinators as a useful planning tool for them and for others who develop professional education programs in sustainable agriculture.
- National SARE develops basic level online course—5 modules phased in over next 2-3 years.
- State coordinators engage Extension and other ag professionals in national online course as part of their ongoing state level activities. [Accomplished through various means-- from simply promoting the course and directing people to it, to organizing on-site workshops where people can come and take the online course as a group accompanied by other activities.]
- State coordinators and other educators develop in-depth professional training based on the topics defined in the framework. [The online course will cover the basics for these topics, but will not be completed in its entirety for another 2-3 years, so some of the regional and state level training will proceed in advance of the online course... topics list and learning outcomes will help ensure complementarity.]
- State coordinators view the curriculum framework as a benefit for their program planning and delivery, and not as an added burden.

SARE National Continuing Education Program in Sustainable Agriculture

Draft Schedule for Framework and Online Course Module 1

1/24/05

Module 1 Course			Framework	
Task	Who	Approx. Deadline	Task	Who
Feedback on course outline due to Val	Design Team	Jan. 28		
Draft copy for 'Key concepts and definitions' <i>(To provide example of the course to accompany framework review)</i>	Val	Jan. 28	Framework text and Web presentation completed and posted on project Web site	Dave
Finalize copy for 'Key concepts and definitions' - send to Brian	Val, Dave, Kim	Feb. 11		
Sample course pages developed for 'Key concepts and definitions'	Brian	Feb. 18		
		late Feb. – early March	Regional focus groups to review framework	Design Team
In-depth outline interview	Val, Dave, Kim	1 st week of March		
Write Module 1	Val	March	Revise and finalize framework based on feedback from focus groups	Dave
Review each unit as it is completed	Design Team			
Revise and finalize units	Val			
Final draft to Brian and Julie and Design Team		April 15		
Design Course pages and activities	Brian, Julie	April 15-May 13		
Develop unit and final tests	Design Team	April 15-May 13		
Incorporate tests into online course	Brian, Julie	last ½ May		
Draft of Web course ready for review		June 1		
Review Web course online	Design team	June 1-16		

Revise Course pages based on feedback from design team	Brian	last ½ June		
Module 1 Web course ready for testing		July 8		
Pilot test course with selected group of extension agents.	???	July - Aug.		
Demonstrate and pilot course as part of NACAA	Dave, Kim	July 17-21		
Revise course based on feedback from pilot test groups.	Brian, Julie, Dave	Aug - Sep.		
Course completed and ready for release		Oct. 1		