



Southern SARE/SRDC Sustainable Community Grants

Funded by Southern Region SARE and Southern Rural Development Center

Since 2002 Southern SARE and Southern Rural Development Center have sponsored the Sustainable Community Innovation Grants. Any person or organization with an idea that will link sustainable agriculture activities to healthy rural community development can apply for an SCI grant. Activities that blend sustainable ag practices with new community development strategies to increase and support resilient farms, businesses, families and communities. This could include but is not limited to developing school materials about local agriculture, establishing nutrition classes about the benefits of local foods, providing agritourism training for county officials and farmers or facilitating local processing of pastured livestock.

When The Okemah Oklahoma Chamber of Commerce proposed to introduce herbs as a high-value, low-acreage crop to the area, they looked to the local school system and a nearby correctional facility to find prospective growers. Staff from Langston University will help develop an herb farm at J.H. Lilley Corrections Facility where inmates can become skilled at growing, drying and marketing herbs. Students who belong to local 4-H and FFA chapters are using educational materials from OSU Cooperative Extension Service about growing and selling herbs. They are also receiving assistance in applying for operating loans through the USDA Rural Youth Loans program to establish and operate herb-centered enterprises.

“We are using tribal lands for the herb gardens and most of the students are tribal members,” said Shirley Almerigi, a retired accountant and 4-H volunteer who sees beyond the economic potential of the project. “By introducing the herbs we are expanding their knowledge of foods and seasonings in hopes of combating our mounting problems with diabetes.”

To tie it all together, the inmates, students and other growers will take part in a herb festival that will become a new component in Okemah’s long-standing heritage celebration—Pioneer Day. (Project CS02-007)



First grader Nina Gonzalez and other young farmers in the Canutillo Independent School District are learning about goats from the ground up in a project that will help establish a magnet center to train youth and beginning farmers in sustainable agriculture. Project CS03-012. Photo by Alfredo Vasquez.

In Florida, Harvest for Humanity, a non-profit 501(c)3 organization, is cooperating with the University of Florida, IFAS Center, to improve the quality of life for farm workers through a living wage, affordable housing, education and traditional community support. Under the umbrella of Harvest for Humanity, founders Richard and Florence Nogaj (nojay), have established the Harvest Farm, the largest blueberry operation in South Florida. The 36-acre farm, currently with 50,000 plants, employs several full-time, salaried farm workers. After five years, the employees will be allowed to purchase the farm through stock options using no-profit, no-interest loans.

The SARE-funded part of this long-term, community effort is to survey whether consumers are willing to pay slightly more for farm products labeled as being USA grown and picked by workers paid a living wage starting at \$8.50 per hour. (Project CS02-008)

A soybean blitz to raise awareness and create demand for the tasty, high-value edamame soybean, was the focus of a project led by a consumer extension agent in Kentucky.

Following production, harvest and storage of test plot beans, the diverse team of producers, cooperative extension staff, and government officials collaborated with marketing and industry officials in five states to reach growers and consumers through state fairs, television programs, conferences and personal appearances.

The result was a spike in media coverage, consumer demand and grower awareness. Find out more at the web site: www.edamame.org. (Project CS02-006)

In Texas the Canutillo Independent School District is developing an agricultural magnet center to train youth and beginning farmers in sustainable agriculture and marketing. Bilingual outreach will multiply the effectiveness of the project. (Project CS03-012)

The Northwest Arkansas Local Food Initiative is promoting All Ozark Meals at area restaurants during the growing season. To be successful, the project requires close coordination of chefs, farmers and a public relations campaign. (Project CS03-014)

Southern Sustainable Community Innovation Projects

CS02-001 Agri-tourism: A Strategy Toward Sustainable Farm, Business, Family and Community, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, VA, \$8,230, D. Brian Calhoun, Ph: (540)469-4030, dcalhoun@vt.edu

CS02-002 Downtown Farmers' Market—Linking the Farm to the Community, Carroll County Farmland and Rural Preservation Committee, \$8,600, Rob Gordy, Ph: (770) 836-6911, robgordy@cbtwga.com

CS02-003 Making the Connection: Enhancing Agricultural Understanding in an Urbanizing Area, (Final Report) Prince William County Farm Tour Inc., VA, \$7,300 Suzanne Heflin, Ph: 703-754-7564, hsheflin@erols.com

CS02-004 Homegrown, From Our Farms to Your Table: Growing a Farmers' Cooperative in East Tennessee, Jubilee Project, Inc., \$6,436, Steve Hodges, Ph: 423-733-4195, stevehodges@naxs.net

CS02-005 SE North Carolina Agri-Tourism Corridor Development, The Conservation Fund, NC, \$7,000, Nancy Hunt, Ph: 919-967-2223, nancyhuntcf@yahoo.com

CS02-006 Keen on Beans: Establishing Edamame Awareness and Demand for Kentucky Consumers and Growers (Final Report) Daviess County Extension Service, University of Kentucky, \$8,712, Martha W. Lee, Ph: (270) 685-8480, mlee@uky.edu

CS02-007 Pioneering the Way to the Future, Okemah Chamber of Commerce, OK, \$6,900, Diann Neal, Ph: 918-623-2440, diann.neal@sbcglobal.net

CS02-008 Test Marketing of New Label in Southwest Florida for USA Grown /Living Wage Produce, Harvest for Humanity, Inc., FL, \$5,200, Richard J. Nogaj, Ph: 239-657-4888, dhfh@ix.netcom.com

CS03-009 Strengthening Rural Communities Through Direct Marketing, University of North Carolina at Greensboro, NC \$9,941, Susan Andreatta, Ph: (336)256-0439, s_andrea@uncg.edu

CS03-010 "Santa Rosa Fresh" Marketing Assistance, Santa Rosa County Agribusiness Committee, FL, \$10,000, Paula Davis, Ph: (850) 983-1848, paulad@co.santa-rosa.fl.us

CS03-011 Making the Connection: Enhancing Agricultural Understanding in an Urbanizing Area, Prince William County Farm Tour, Inc., VA, \$7,200, Suzanne Heflin, Ph: (703) 754-7564, hsheflin@erols.com

CS03-012 Sustainable Agriculture Innovations Lead to Rural Success, Canutillo Independent School District, TX, \$10,000, Gayla Kessinger, Ph: (915) 877-7466, gkessinger@canutillo.k12.tx.us

CS03-013 Expanding Community-Based Retail Opportunities for Agricultural Products Through the Woodford County Farmers' Market Association, University of Kentucky CES Community and Economic Programs, KY, \$9,700, Betty King, Ph: (859) 257-3404, bking@uky.edu.

CS03-014 Northwest Arkansas Local Food Initiative: Promoting All-Ozark Meals, ATTRA, AR, \$9,978, Julia Sampson, Ph: (479) 442-9824, julias@ncat.org

CS03-015 Community Development Through a Regional Food System Plan, Accomac-Northhampton Planning District Commission, VA, \$10,000, Barbara Schwenk, Ph: (757) 787-2936, schwenk@easternshore.org

CS03-016 Taylor Community Supported Agriculture Project, United Christian Community Association, AL, \$10,000, Evelyn Williams, Ph: (334) 627-3970, evelynswilliams@hotmail.com

CS03-017 Putting Pike on the Map, Citizens to Promote Pike, Inc., GA, \$9,680, Chris Curry, Ph: (770) 567-0428, billchrisfarm@aol.com

CS03-018 New River Sustainable Agriculture Marketing Plan, New River Community Partners, NC, \$10,000, Hollis Wild, Ph: (336)372-8118, hwild@skybest.com

CS04-019 Sustainable Agriculture for Future Economics (SAFE), AL, \$10,000, Wendy Allen, Healthy Coastal Communities Initiative of the Mobile Bay National Estuary Program Ph: 251-510-8002, wndy1000@netzero.net

CS04-020 Women Taking the Lead for Kentucky Agriculture, \$9,900, KY, Gae Broadwater, Community Resource and Economic Development, Kentucky State University, Ph: 859-257-3887 bonnie.tanner@uky.edu

CS04-021 A Strategy for Sustaining Henderson County Agricultural Communities, NC, \$8,500, Joshua Freeman, Henderson County, Ph: 828-697-4763, freeman@hendersoncountync.org

CS04-022 Linking Small-Farm Agriculture to Community Development Efforts in Northern Louisiana, LA, \$9,980, Elizabeth Higgins, LA Tech Univ Center for Rural Development, Ph: 318-257-2919, ehiggins@latech.edu

CS04-023 Youth as Community Organizers, FL, \$10,000, Ellen Huntley, Florida Certified Organic Growers and Consumers, Inc. Ph: 352-377-6345, fogoffice@aol.com

CS04-024 Comer Farmers' Market, GA, \$10,000, Tina McCullough, Ph: 706-783-4665, jsmtem@netzero.net

CS04-025 Aquaculture Development in the Pine Mountain Region of Southeast Kentucky, KY, \$10,000, Paul L. Pratt, Southeast Community College, Ph: 606-589-2145, paul.pratt@kctcs.edu

CS04-026 Four County Farmers Market, MS, \$10,000, Steve Anderson, Webster Co. Development Council, Inc., Ph: 662-258-7835, webwcdc@bellsouth.net

CS04-027 Agricultural Community Support Across Boundaries, NC, \$10,000, Tom Elmore, Land-of-Sky Regional Council, Ph: 828-251-6622, tom@landofsky.org

CS04-028 Farming and Conservation Easements, FL, \$10,000, Mark Hostetler, Dept of Wildlife Ecology & Conservation/Univ of Florida, Ph: 352-846-0568, hostetlerm@wec.ufl.edu

CS04-029 Battlefield Farmers' Market, GA, \$10,000, David Matteson, Walker Co. Young Farmers, Ph: 706-638-7739, Matfa@aol.com

CS04-030 Healthy Livestock Agriculture & Healthy People, NC, \$10,000, Sally Norton, UNC @ Chapel Hill Program on Integrative Medicine, Ph: 919-966-8586, sally_norton@med.unc.edu

CS04-031 Sustaining a Growing Economic and Natural Resource Community, VA, \$10,000, Elizabeth Stoffel, Potomac Conservancy, Ph: 540-667-3606, stoffel@potomac.org

CS04-032 Developing a Marketing Network for Central Alabama, AL \$10,000, Karen Wynne, Alabama Sustainable Agriculture Network, Ph: 256-520-2400, wynnekaren@hotmail.com