



National Association of Community Development Extension Professionals -2020 Virtual Conference

How Network Analysis of a Minority Farmers` Group Helped Expand Socio-Economic Opportunities and Engage Youth in Agriculture.

Andy Wetherill – Delaware State University – June 1st 2020

Stephan Goetz, PHd – NERCRD-Penn State – June 1st 2020

Introduction

- What percentage of the 3900 farm have minority owners or operators
- A. Less than 1%
- B. 5%
- C. 10%
- D. 20%





Situation, Problem and Challenges

- ▶ According to the 2017 USDA Ag. Census < 1% of the 3900 farms in Delaware are owned and operated by minorities
 - ▶ Minority producers believe they are least represented at the farm table, at all levels. This limits their ability to access resources to develop and grow in an economically viable fashion.
- ▶ Based on extension surveys, farm assessments, group meeting and farm visits, findings suggest that there is a need to address the following:
 - ▶ Expand economic opportunities for minority producers
 - ▶ Increase minority representation on organizations, committees and agencies that influence government policy
 - ▶ Increase mentorship and experiential learning for youths involvement in agriculture



Challenge and opportunity

- Between 2007 to 2017 producers have tried, with limited success, to develop a minority farming association in Delaware.
 - In 2018, after some preliminary discussions, Delaware State University cooperative extension and some Delaware minority producers met to develop plans to form a new farmers organization.
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Program/ Research Design and Description

- ▶ Program Development of the new farmer network was built on research completed under a USDA – CBG grant entitled,
 - ▶ Enhancing the Viability of Underserved Small Farms and Rural Communities Using Insights from Emerging Networks.
 - ▶ The grant was designed to assist underserved producers to work collectively to reduce production cost-(through economies of scale), and access agricultural markets.

One output for the project was the production of an extension manual entitled:

- ▶ *Analysis of Farmers Groups: A Training for Extension Educators*
- ▶ As a co-PI on the project, Andy Wetherill was able to assist and advise on the formation of the new farmers organization in Delaware



Program/ Research Design and Description

- ▶ The 1890 CBG Logic model was adopted to implement programs and to track development and progress of the farmers association. The Model addressed the following objectives:
 1. Formation of a new farmers organization
 2. Increase technical assistance to minority producers to enhance farm viability
 3. Increase youth involvement in agriculture
 4. Increase civic engagement among members of the association
 5. Provision of relevant and up to date agricultural information that will benefit minority farmers

Surveys, face to face events, consultation, email and social media are be used to track progress in the organization

Results- Progress Made by the Association

Successful Impacts

- ❖ Since its inception in 2018 (2 years) the association has obtained legal entity status as a c(3)
- ❖ Members receive technical assistance, agricultural updates, and attend a monthly meeting. The Delaware state University (25 active members),



Results –Progress Made by the Association the Chapel Farm in Smvrna



Progress Made to
engage youth in
agriculture

- ▶ Collaboration between DSU cooperative extension and the association has facilitated seven urban student to receive on farm experiential learning on 2 farm operations in rural Delaware
- ▶ Students on the tour have expressed an interest in learning more about agricultural careers.

Result – Progress Made by the Association

Wally Daniel –high tunnel agricultural producer



Progress made by the Association – Civic Engagement

- ▶ Members of the association are contesting seats to affect change to benefit minority organizations
- ▶ One producer unsuccessfully contested a seat on the Kent Country Agricultural Committee in 2019

Result – Progress Made by the Association

Town hall meeting with US De. Rep
Lisa Blunt- Rochester



Progress made by the Association –
Civic Engagement

- Delaware State University under the auspices of the association hosted a town hall meeting.
 - In August 2018, Rep. Lisa Blunt- Rochester hosted a town hall meeting with producers at Delaware state University



Implementations and Recommendations for Practice

- ▶ The training manual was a useful tool that outlines how to conduct network analysis and it describes basic concepts used to collect primary data for the networking.
- ▶ Network analysis illustrates communication patterns and identifies individuals who are effective in reaching network members. This knowledge increases extensions capacity to assist in development and structuring of emerging networks or groups.
- ▶ When extension participate in the development of a group, it increases its capacity to deliver beneficial program to members of the group.
- ▶ Finally the partnership enhance the institutional capacity for outreach , since the network is willing to serve and as an outreach arm of extension
- ▶ Thanks! Question!!!

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