

## FLORIDA EXTENSION INITIATIVE 1:

INCREASING THE SUSTAINABILITY, PROFITABILITY, AND COMPETITIVENESS OF AGRICULTURAL AND HORTICULTURAL ENTERPRISES

## STATEWIDE EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS IN CITIZEN AWARENESS OF FOOD SYSTEMS AND THE ENVIRONMENT

## SITUATION

Literacy has been defined as a social phenomenon that influences attitudes and actions (Frick & Spotanski, 1990). Agricultural literacy is the knowledge and perception of agriculture that an individual has (Wright, Stewart, & Birkenholz, 1994). Several scholars have indicated that US youth and adults are no longer agriculturally literate (Frick, Birkenholz, Machtmes, 1995; Mayer & Mayer, 1974; Wright et al., 1994). It is likely, a large and growing number of Florida residents and visitors have low agricultural literacy due to the following:

- Industrialization and the continual advancement of technology have created a widening gap between the general public and Florida's agriculture and natural resources (Goodwin, Chiarelli, & Irani, 2011).
- Less than 2% of the United States workforce is now employed in an agricultural field, less than 5% of the population lives on a farm, and only 20% of the population lives in a rural area (Dimitri, Effland, & Conklin, 2005).
- The agricultural and natural resource industries have historically communicated with each other rather than the public (Telg & Irani, 2012).
- The agricultural industry has focused on communicating the science and has failed to communicate about ethics and concerns consumers associate with agricultural practices (Frewer, Hedderley, Howard, & Shepherd, 1997; Goodman & DuPuis, 2002; Weatherell, Tregear, & Allinson, 2003).

Additionally, many of Florida's residents live in urban areas. The 2010 Census reported that 91.2% of Florida's population lives in an area classified as urban according to the Urban Rural Continuum (U.S. Census Bureau, 2015). Of those residing in Florida, only 36% were born in Florida, indicating that much of the population has come from other states or countries (Munzenrieder, 2014). The large urban and non-native Florida population further impacts the need for increased awareness of agriculture and the environment as many are unfamiliar with Florida agriculture and/or have limited opportunities to observe Florida agriculture. With an Extension presence in all of Florida's 67 counties, often in urban areas, Extension is well positioned to reach youth, adults, and policy makers and increase their awareness of Florida agriculture and the environment. Extension can help increase the agricultural literacy and awareness of Florida residents and visitors by offering programming aimed at providing information about agriculture and the environment so that these audiences are able to form attitudes and opinions, gain knowledge, make behavior changes, and increase their economic support of Florida agriculture through increased purchases of Florida-grown food.

Key collaborations for agricultural awareness programming include awareness priority teams in other Extension Initiatives, Florida Farm Bureau Federation, Florida Ag in the Classroom, commodity organizations throughout the state, state and local governments, university departments and centers including the Agricultural Education and Communication Department and the Center for Public Issues Education among others, tourist development councils, and community organizations. However, several challenges are associated with increasing agricultural awareness including funding, varying needs throughout the state, a mobile population, cultural diversity, and multilingual needs. The availability of personnel to dedicate time to increasing awareness is also a challenge.

## PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

- Objective 1: At least 60% of youth and adult participants will report increased knowledge of the value of agriculture and the environment at the end of an Extension program.
- Objective 2: At least 60% of youth and adult participants will report increased knowledge of the challenges and issues associated with agriculture and the environment at the end of an Extension program.
- Objective 3: At least 60% of youth and adult participants will report a greater appreciation of agriculture and the environment at the end of an Extension program.
- Objective 4: At least 60% of youth and adult participants will report a better understanding of the economic impact of agriculture and the environment at the end of an Extension program.

- Objective 5: At least 50% of youth and adults who participate in Extension programs will share with others the information related to agriculture and the environment acquired from an Extension program, within six months of the program.
- Objective 6: At least 50% of youth and adult participants will get more involved, or express intent to get involved, in agriculture and environment initiatives as a result of an Extension program, within six months of the program.
- Objective 7: At least 50% of youth and adult participants will buy, or express intent to buy, Florida-grown food/products as a result of an Extension program, within six months of the program.
- Objective 8: At least 50% of youth and adult participants will make informed decisions, or express intent to make informed decisions on issues related to Florida agriculture and the environment as a result of an Extension program, within six months of the program.
- Objective 9: Increase sales of Florida grown products over a five-year period.
- Objective 10: Promote policy decision-making related to Agriculture and Natural Resources in Florida based on evidence-based analysis of facts and implications over a five-year period.
- Objective 11: Increase the numbers of youth and adults seeking careers related to agriculture and the environment over a five-year period.

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## EDUCATIONAL METHODS

Many traditional educational methods and Extension programs can meet the objectives of this priority area. Any program or method that seeks to increase knowledge of agriculture and/or natural resource topics can increase literacy and ultimately awareness of these topics. These programs/methods may include but are not limited to

- Farm tours or Eco tours
- Face to face workshops or presentations
- Online workshops or presentations
- Informational handouts, displays, or publications
- In-service trainings

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## RESULTS

- Objective 1: At least 60% of youth and adult participants will report increased knowledge of the value of agriculture and the environment at the end of an Extension program.
  - Outcome: Increased knowledge of the value of agriculture and the environment among youth and adults.
  - Indicators:
    - Quantitative increases in knowledge recorded in program evaluations.
    - Participant success stories detailing increased knowledge of the value of agriculture and the environment.
- Objective 2: At least 60% of youth and adult participants will report increased knowledge of the challenges and issues associated with agriculture and the environment at the end of an Extension program.
  - Outcome: Increased knowledge of the challenges and issues associated with agriculture and the environment among youth and adults.
  - Indicators:
    - Quantitative increases in knowledge recorded in program evaluations.
    - Participant success stories detailing increased in knowledge related to the challenges and issues associated with agriculture and the environment.
- Objective 3: At least 60% of youth and adult participants will report a greater appreciation of agriculture and the environment at the end of an Extension program.
  - Outcome: Youth and adults will discuss their appreciation of agriculture and the environment.
  - Indicators:
    - Quantitative increases in appreciation recorded in program evaluations.
    - Participant success stories detailing a greater appreciation for agriculture and the environment as a result of Extension programming.

- **Objective 4:** At least 60% of youth and adult participants will report a better understanding of the economic impact of agriculture and the environment at the end of an Extension program.
  - **Outcome:** Youth and adults will recognize and understand the economic impact of agriculture and the environment to farmers/landowners, their local area, and/or the state.
  - **Indicators:**
    - Quantitative increases in understanding of the economic impact recorded in program evaluations.
    - Participant success stories detailing a better understanding of the economic impact of agriculture and the environment to farmers/landowners, their local area, and/or the state as a result of Extension programming.
  
- **Objective 5:** At least 50% of youth and adults who participate in Extension programs will share with others the information related to agriculture and the environment acquired from an Extension program, within six months of the program.
  - **Outcome:** Youth and adults share with others what they have learned about agriculture and the environment.
  - **Indicators:**
    - Quantitative intent to tell others what they have learned recorded in program evaluations.
    - Participant success stories detailing the sharing of information they have learned about agriculture and the environment as a result of Extension programming.
  
- **Objective 6:** At least 50% of youth and adult participants will get more involved, or express intent to get involved, in agriculture and environment initiatives as a result of an Extension program, within six months of the program.
  - **Outcome:** Youth and adults will increase their involvement in agriculture and environment initiatives.
  - **Indicators:**
    - Quantitative intent to get more involved in agriculture and environment initiatives recorded in program evaluations.
    - Participant success stories detailing involvement in agriculture and environment initiatives as a result of Extension programming.
  
- **Objective 7:** At least 50% of youth and adult participants will buy, or express intent to buy, Florida-grown food/products as a result of an Extension program, within six months of the program.
  - **Outcome:** Increased purchases of Florida-grown food/products.
  - **Indicators:**
    - Quantitative intent to buy Florida grown food/products recorded in program evaluations.
    - Participant success stories detailing purchases of Florida-grown food/products as a result of Extension programming.
  
- **Objective 8:** At least 50% of youth and adult participants will make informed decisions, or express intent to make informed decisions on issues related to Florida agriculture and the environment as a result of an Extension program, within six months of the program.
  - **Outcome:** Youth and adults will make informed decisions on agriculture/natural resource topics as well as use information from UF/IFAS when making policy decisions in regards to agriculture and natural resources.
  - **Indicators:**
    - Quantitative intent to make better-informed decisions recorded in program evaluations.
    - Quantitative intent to use UF/IFAS information when making policy decisions recorded in program evaluations.
    - Participant success stories detailing informed decision making and the use of UF/IFAS information when making policy decisions in regards to agriculture and the environment as a result of Extension programming.
  
- **Objective 9:** Increase sales of Florida grown products over a five-year period.
  - **Outcome:** Increased economic impact of Florida grown food/products.

- Total sales of Florida grown products disaggregated at the local, regional, and state levels.
  - Quantitative reported sales in a follow-up survey.
- **Objective 10:** Promote policy decision-making related to Agriculture and Natural Resources in Florida based on evidence-based analysis of facts and implications over a five-year period.
    - **Outcome:** Policy decisions related to Agriculture and Natural Resources in Florida made based on facts and implications.
    - **Indicators:**
      - Number of new or revised policies related to Agriculture and Natural Resources driven by evidence-based relevant and comprehensive information.
  - **Objective 11:** Increase the numbers of youth and adults seeking careers related to agriculture and the environment over a five-year period.
    - **Outcome:** A continual workforce supply for industries related to agriculture and the environment.
    - **Indicators:**
      - Number of individuals entering into agriculture and natural resources educational programs and/or jobs.

## NEEDS

- Development and statewide use of a standard evaluation for agriculture an environment awareness
- Use of statewide agriculture and environment awareness materials
- Reporting that captures the breadth of agriculture and environment awareness programming occurring throughout the state and the impacts of that programming
- Grant funding for statewide agriculture and environment awareness programming
- Adult volunteers to promote agricultural and environment awareness

## SUPER ISSUES

What Super Issue does this Priority Work Group relate to? **[Must list at least one.]**

- ❖ Awareness and appreciation of food systems and the environment.
- ❖ Resource sustainability and conservation in Florida communities.
- ❖ Financial management for individuals and enterprises.
- ❖ Science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) opportunities for youth.
- ❖ Help Floridians develop healthy lifestyles.

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Citizen awareness of food systems and the environment  
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