

**University of Maryland Eastern Shore**  
**2013 NESARE State Program Annual Progress Report (second year of three-year plan)**  
**Berran Rogers**

**Project Title:** Introducing direct marketing strategies as an alternative to preserve small-scale agriculture

**Performance Target:**

- Five agriculture service providers will develop educational programs on direct marketing reaching 150 farmers of which 20% will establish a new marketing strategy.
- By adopting one or more direct marketing strategies, twenty-five farmers will reach a total of 1,000 new customers collectively increasing farm sales by an average of \$2,500 dollars.

**Performance Target Outcomes Reported:**

- 1 ag. professional collaborated with a featured speaker from the 2012 UMES Small Farms Conference (SFC) workshop to host a workshop on Using Social Media to Increase Farm Profitability; 9 farmers attended.
- 2 ag service providers shared information from the annual SFC and individual workshops via their client email listserv that reaches more than 75 farmers
- 1 Extension specialist wrote an article about the marketing strategies featured at each stop on the 2012-2013 direct marketing bus tour for quarterly newsletter that reaches more than 150 farmers
- 1 small farm agent shared resource information from Direct Marketing Bus Tour with farmer clients.
- 2 farmers explored a venture to develop value-added products (tomato juice, pickled relish).
- 2 farmers expanded their market by incorporating free-range poultry to their existing farm operation. The idea took root after both attended the direct marketing farm bus tour and educational workshops where farmer presenters shared their experiences on direct marketing farm raised meats.
- 1 farmer who learned about starting CSAs through the state program has just started his own CSA and is networking with other farmers to form a CSA grower group.

**Other Outcomes Reported:**

- 1 new partnership between with MD Dept. of Agriculture and UME has been formed to do more outreach activities for farmers focused on direct marketing opportunities.
- 1 new partnership with MD of Agriculture has been formed to plan and host a one-day event for growers to showcase products and network with potential buyers. Regulations on value-added products, GAPs, and other marketing strategies will also be shared via seminars.

<b>Milestone Activities Reported in 2013</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 on-farm demonstration and 1 classroom-style workshop on growing and marketing berries using high tunnel systems were conducted.</li> <li>• 3 educational seminars about direct marketing were conducted at the 2012 SFC. (Topics: value-added products/marketing; CSAs, farmers markets, advertising; internet marketing)</li> <li>• 1 Pre-conference half-day workshop on direct marketing (identifying resources, conducting marketing research, identifying target customers, and marketing strategies) was held at SFC.</li> </ul>
<b>Program Participants</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• On-farm demonstration and workshop: 7 ag. service providers (including Extension and industry representatives) and approximately 35 farmers and/or aspiring farmers participated.</li> <li>• Seminars: Approximately 30 ag service providers and 75 farmers attended one or more of the conference seminars offered during conference.</li> <li>• Pre-conference workshop: 3 Ag. service providers and 15 farmers attended the event.</li> </ul>

## Assessments of Learning

Surveys administered at educational events indicated that participants increased knowledge in the following direct marketing topics:

- Marketing programs and resources available within state
- Basic marketing principles (advertising, branding, 4 P's of marketing)
- Using Social Media and other e-commerce strategies
- Direct marketing farm-raised meats
- Value added processing and regulations
- Starting CSAs
- Adopting specialty niche crops (to expand marketing outlets)

## Outreach about SARE Grant Programs

- 4 exhibits/presentations about SARE grants at conferences and meetings, and individual consultations reached 70 ag service providers and 204 farmers.