

Arkansas Land and Community Development Corporation

Project Performance Closeout Progress Report

Performance Period: August 2014 thru August 2016

Report Type: Project Performance Closeout Report

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Project Title: Outreach to Underserved Farmers and Landowners in Arkansas

Project Award Number: 69-3A75-14-185

Project Purpose: To assist limited resource and socially disadvantaged farmers, ranchers and landowners with developing and adopting plans to conserve soil and water resources, control trap nutrient runoff and enroll/increase the targeted population participation in one or more NRCS programs.

Organization Program Service Delivery Background: The Arkansas Land and Community Development Corporation (ALCDC) is a non-profit community based organization with 501 © 3 Internal Revenue Service status. ALCDC was established to provide dedicated outreach service to the under-served population, socially disadvantaged farmers, ranchers, landowners and rural communities. ALCDC areas of program service delivery have a rich history for providing economically beneficial outcomes for the underserved and un-served segments of the population. Outreach training, technical assistance and farm development services for limited resources and minority farmers has resulted in maintaining ownership and improved USDA program services for more than 20,000 acres of land with a current value of over \$40.2 million dollars.

Project Delivery Approach: ALCDC's project delivery approach for the Outreach to Underserved Farmers and Landowners in Arkansas consisted of a strong network of community-based organizations, volunteers, and active supporters across its 42 county ALCDC service regions. It also included an equally active network of state, federal, and local government agencies coordinated with NRCS Strike Force.

The primary focus of the project consisted of conservation program service delivery. A significant part of the service deliverable work effort was through *outreach*.

Outreach – Project deliverable activities included workshop promotions and training events. **E-Letters** and over **2,200 informational/educational newsletters** were sent quarterly to the project targeted population, totaling for the project period, seventeen thousand six hundred 17,600 publications. **Press releases were distributed to the news media and radio talk shows were conducted**, promoting and advertising four (4) state wide conferences and twenty four (24) information and training workshops. **Radio announcements** impacted over 35,000 listeners. Promotional flyers were also sent to churches throughout ALCDC service area advertising workshops and training events through the project period.

Deliverables:

- A. **Twelve (12) regional on-farm sites that demonstrate regionally appropriate conservation practices that are appropriate for limited resource and socially disadvantaged farm operators.**
- Thomas Givens sustainable pasture management, development of NRCS Conservation plan that include prescribed grazing & silvo-pasture management.
 - Lawrence Conyers traditional row crop, soil topography, soil type, and water drainage characteristics and their impacts on environmental and economic sustainability of the farming enterprise nutrient management.
 - Reginald Taylor, traditional row crop, soil topography, soil type, and water drainage characteristics and their impacts on environmental and economic sustainability of the farming enterprise nutrient management.
 - Bobbi Holmes, traditional row crop and cattle; prescribed grazing & Silva-pasture, cover crops to maintain or improve the physical, chemical and biological condition of the soil.
 - Terrance Scott, traditional row crops, soybeans; cover crops to maintain and improve the physical, chemical and biological condition of soil & irrigation water management.
 - Floyd Jones, traditional row crops, soybeans; NRCS conservations practices recommended ,NRCS Conservation plan, irrigation water management, cover crops to maintain or improve the physical, chemical and biological condition of the soil.

- David Box, alternative crops soil nutrient management to maintain or improve the physical, chemical and biological soil conditions.
- Clyde Gordon, , traditional row crops, soybeans; NRCS conservations practices recommended ,NRCS Conservation plan, irrigation water management, cover crops to maintain and improve the physical, chemical and biological soil conditions.
- Thomas Webb, livestock production, pasture management related to soil nutrient management for beef cattle and maintain or improve the physical, chemical and biological condition of the soil.
- Miles Harshaw, alternative crops ; recommended NRCS conservation plan for alternative crops, including high tunnel systems & micro irrigation to efficiently and uniformly apply irrigation to maintain soil moisture for plant growth and production quality.
- George Humphrey, alternative crops and livestock production, water conservation and pasture management for pasture soil nutrient management.
- Albert Brady, alternative crops high tunnel sprinkler irrigation system, soil nutrient management to maintain soil moisture for plant growth and quality crop production.
- James Lee, traditional row crop; irrigation water management, cover crops to maintain or improve the physical, chemical and biological soil conditions.
- Tim Wilson Beef Cattle Rancher; water conservation and pasture management for soil nutrient management.
- Ezell Branch's Vegetables Producer; high tunnel sprinkler irrigation system and soil nutrient management.
- Rickey Prowell Row Crop Farmer; water irrigation management, soil nutrient management and cover crops
- Kevin Holmes Sr. Row Crop Farmer (soybeans, corn and milo); soil conservation practices, cover crops, and soil nutrient management.
- Mack Clevand's Vegetable Farmer; water irrigation management & soil nutrient management

- Gwendolyn Stephenson Farm Soybeans, Milo and Vegetables; cover crops for soil nutrient management.
- James Wilson II farm; cover crops for soil nutrient management and soil conservation.
- Ralph Sigears Farm; cover crops for soil conservation and soil nutrient management.
- Lonnie Wade Farm (row crops); development of soil conservation plan, soil nutrient management and cover crops
- Frank Scott Farm (row crops); plan for soil conservation and soil nutrient management – soybeans, corn & milo
- Ivory Neely Farm (row crops); plan for soil conservation and soil nutrient management – soybeans & corn
- Thelma Bryant Ranch (beef cattle); plan for water conservation and pasture base management.
- Curtis Floyd Farm (rice farmer); plan for soil and water conservation.
- Israel Gordon Farm (row crop); plan for soil conservation and nutrient management – soybeans, corn & milo
- Earnest Cox Farm (row crop) plan for pest management and soil nutrient management.
- Ben Anthony's Farm (vegetable farm) high tunnel drip irrigation and soil nutrient management.
- Harvey Williams 'Farm (vegetable) plan for high tunnel sprinkler irrigation and soil nutrient management.
- Brady's Farm (vegetable); high tunnel crop variety demonstration.
- Melvin Neely's Farm (row crops); plan for soil conservation and nutrient management.

- Dermott Economic Development Project of Eastern Arkansas which ALCDC collaborated with to recruit establish an small farm incubation site for socially disadvantaged farmers and for on-farm demonstration of conservation/best practices of sustainable farming – Demonstration Site
- Light House Farms (vegetable); plan for soil conservation and nutrient management.
- Livestock Association of Eastern Arkansas (beef cattle); demonstrations of water conservation and rotated grazing/pasture management
- Carpenter Produce Farm (vegetable); plan for soil and water conservation and soil nutrient management.
- Peer Farms (row crop-corn, rice and milo) plan for soil and water conservation and soil nutrient management cover crops.
- Roger Smith Farm (row crops); plan for soil conservation and nutrient management.
- Lott Johnson Farm (row crops); plan for irrigation and soil nutrient management.
- Dolores Robinson Rancher (beef cattle); plan for water conservation and rotated pasture grazing management.

B. 12 workshops or field day events per year (3 per region) with an anticipated attendance of 25 persons per event.

Regional and Multi-Regional Conference Workshops for the Project Period

- One (1) Field Observation Education Workshop; ALCDC invited a select group of producers to an observation education tour of Lawrence Conyers & Reginald Taylor’s Discovery Farms in Pine Bluff, Arkansas. Arkansas Discovery Farms are privately owned farms where demonstrations and research is conducted on the environmental impact of agricultural production. An observation education workshop session was held for the tour participants on “Edge-of-Field Monitoring”. Sessions presented represented researchers evaluating the interaction between such factors as topography, soil type, and water drainage characteristics and their impacts on environmental and economic sustainability of the farming enterprise nutrient management.

The farms are sponsored by public-private entities including, the United States Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service, Farm Bureau of Arkansas and other participating sponsors. NRCS provides technical and financial assistance to farmers in targeted watersheds who are interested in voluntarily installing monitoring stations. The goal for the Discovery Farms education tour was to provide a better understanding to our targeted population of the opportunity diversity available to employ conservation practices through partnerships. The practices are designed on temporary demonstration units to enable ongoing affordable USDA conservation program participation representative of Arkansas agriculture.

- Partnership Participation Conference Workshop (2); Participated in two (2) University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff's Annual Rural Life Conference (Pine Bluff) one of Arkansas' largest conferences for Historically Underserved Ranchers and Farmers. Provided literature on ALCDC's outreach programs and services to conference attendees on soil nutrient management and other USDA programs and services. Provided a display of photos on ALCDC outreach program activities.
- Six (6) training work sessions were conducted by ALCDC staff on prescribed grazing and soil nutrient management with the Livestock Association of Eastern, an agricultural cooperative.
- Four (4) multi-regional Conferences (Fargo) with an audience of 640 attendees, including farmers, landowners and ranchers. The event served as a multi-regional workshop providing: focused presentations on soil conservation and nutrient management; USDA available program services for farmers and ranchers and information on priority targeted State Strike Force counties for USDA program services. Individual consultations and case/application for farmers and ranchers was provided by the ALCDC staff.
- Three (3) Regional Conference/Workshop (Dermott); the session provided training on soil conservation and nutrient management, EQIP practices and eligibility requirements and forest stewardship management.
- Four (4) Sustainable farming workshops were held in the City of Hope and the Counties of Hempstead and Arkansas. These workshops focused on farming as a sustainable and profitable business relying on analysis, technology and comprehensive planning, and complete implementation of the best practices of: Whole Farm Management; Financial Plans; Conservation Plans; Marketing Plans and Risk Management.

- One (1) Farm Conservation Financing workshop in the City of Fargo, County of Monroe, Arkansas. This workshop addressed financing options for EQIP cost share contracts and soil fertility/nutrient management financing needs.
- Three (3) workshops in Dermott, Arkansas; the workshop focused on soil and nutrient management, and conservation practices.
- Six (6) workshops were conducted; the workshops provided training included soil nutrient management, farm management, conservation practices, NRCS program services and eligibility requirements, and mitigating barriers, e.g., heir property, to NRCS program services. Workshops were conducted in Lake Village (152 attendees), Altheimer (25 attendees), Little Rock (19 attendees), Conway-(2) (89 attendees), and Lewisville (85 attendees).

C. 100 completed conservation plans per year by eligible farmers and land owners

- Approximately 180 conservation plans were signed up. The participation is attributed to, newsletter distribution, radio talk shows and announcements , press release to the media and workshop training and information dissemination.

D. Seventy five (75) applications from first-time enrollees in NRCS programs per year by eligible farmers and land owners.

- One hundred (100) first-time enrollees participated in NRCS programs during the period.

E. Model farm plan prepared for USDA micro and direct farm loan program. The model plans were implemented to provide direct assistance to farmers for farm financing throughout project service area. Farm plans included cost share conservation program services. The application process also included the distribution of information on applicable NRCS programs and their eligibility requirements.

Project Barriers Major barriers for the project involved landowners and farm operator's involvement with heir property. Other barriers involved program regulation/guidelines (irrigation history) and the participants fear of government programs. To address these issues, ALCDC developed educational and training publication to address these issues.

