



SOUTHERN WILLAMETTE VALLEY SMALL FARM PROGRAM

Benton, Lane and Linn Counties

July 2017

A NEEDS ASSESSMENT

This evaluation of existing data, focus groups, interviews with key community partners and survey of farmers and landowners provides documentation of community needs for small-scale agriculture in the Southern Willamette Valley region.

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OSU EXTENSION SMALL FARMS MISSION & VISION

The mission of the OSU Extension Small Farms Program is to:

Provide Oregon's small farms, ranches and local food system stakeholders with the training, tools, and research they need for long-term financial and environmental sustainability.

The vision of the program includes:

- Successful small farms
- Organic and sustainable farming systems
- Healthy and resilient community food systems
- Strong local food economies

HISTORY OF REGIONAL PROGRAM

The OSU Extension Service Small Farms program serving the Southern Willamette Valley (SWV) began in 1996. Garry Stephenson who through various methods of assessment determined that a significant need for small farmers was to improve direct marketing of products to consumers. He also identified continued needs from non-commercial small acreage farms requesting land management education on topics such as pasture and grazing management, manure management, and weed control. He began concentrating his regional Extension focus on small farms. In the early 2000's, Garry worked with the College of Agriculture and Extension to allocate funding to hire instructors who would serve the Willamette Valley and mid Coastal regions. In 2005, Melissa Fery was hired at 0.50 FTE to work on county programming in Benton, Linn and Lane County. Through grant, county, and state funding made available through positions changes, Amy Garrett, with background in horticulture and experience with organic production systems, was hired in 2011 with 0.49 FTE to job-share with Melissa and has since increased her base FTE to 0.60 through various funds. In addition, Chrissy Lucas, Educational Program Assistant II works with Amy and Melissa, supporting the regional program at approximately 0.30 FTE. FTE may increase based on external funding opportunities related to special projects.

GOALS FOR NEEDS ASSESSMENT

There are three goals or primary reasons for completing a comprehensive needs assessment for the Southern Willamette Valley region:

1. Validation of current small farm programming.
2. Identification of educational needs or gaps for small-scale farmers, ranchers and landowners.
3. Provide documented evaluation process and findings to stakeholders, partners and peers.

FARMER AND STAKEHOLDER ASSESSMENTS

Several farmer and stakeholder assessments and surveys have been completed by different entities in the Southern Willamette Valley. The following have been evaluated for information that would be applicable to this needs assessment.

CENSUS OF AGRICULTURE

The Census of Agriculture is conducted every five years (most recent were 2007 and 2012). The Census provides a detailed picture of U.S. farm and ranch businesses and the people who operate them. A farm business must report at least \$1000 in gross sales to be included in the census.

According to the 2012 Census, 3,925 or 70% of the farms in Benton, Linn, and Lane counties are 50 acres or less. However, the number of potential clients to service is much greater. Over 21,000 landowners are identified as owning properties that are between 2-50 acres and zoned for agriculture and rural residential use in the three county region by county assessor offices.

Since the 2007 Census, the total number of farms in our region has decreased by 15%, the number of farms 50 acres or less has decreased by 16%, and irrigated farm acreage has decreased by 25%. Jeff Choate, Commercial Horticulture faculty with OSU Extension Service has utilized data from the 2012 Census to provide information regarding the harvested cropland in the region (Appendix).

The census shows that 5,328 or 95% of the farms in our region fit the USDA's definition of a 'small farm' which is grossing less than \$250,000 annually. Studies show that a small farm needs \$140,000 - \$220,000 gross sales to net \$34,000. (Fake, 2016). The large range of gross sales depends on the farm enterprise(s) and the types of markets the products are sold to.

In 2012, the Census started to collect data from organic farms and reported there to be 140 organic farms in our region (including those exempt) grossing \$29,386,000 in organic product sales, and 22 farms transitioning to organic.

The average age of farmers in our region is between 59 and 60 years old indicating that in the near future, land ownership will change significantly within the next few decades. This fact is concerning to many partners, including those at a National level, which has created emphasis on beginning farmer and rancher programming and funding to train new farmers.

Ethnicity of farm and ranch operators in the region are primarily white (97%). Percentages of operators with minority origins are as follows: 2% Spanish, Hispanic or Latino, 0.8% American Indian or Alaska Native, 0.5% Asian, 0.1% Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islanders, 0.04% Black or African American. Operators reporting more than one race is 1%. Data were collected for a maximum of three operators per farm. Women are reported to be principal operators of 23% of the region's farms.

ENHANCING ORGANIC AGRICULTURE IN OREGON (EM 9050)

This statewide assessment of research, education, and policy need of Oregon's organic sector from several perspectives. Among the farmers surveyed, the following four topics emerged as priorities:

1. Costs of production
2. Marketing
3. Access to Inputs
4. Farm labor

The researchers interviewed highlighted the following research needs: pest and disease management, weed management, plant breeding, seed saving, and nutrient management.

FRIENDS OF FAMILY FARMERS' LISTENING SESSIONS

FoFF hosted eighteen listening sessions in 2015-2016 including the communities of Junction City, Brownsville, Philomath, and Cottage Grove in the SWV region. The top five themes identified by farmers and listed in order of priority are:

1. Access to Land for Beginning Farmers
2. Water Resource Management and Conservation
3. Labor
4. Food Safety Modernization Act Compliance
5. Land Use

OREGON FOOD BANK COMMUNITY FOOD ASSESSMENTS

Within the Benton, Lane, and Linn County region, the Oregon Food Bank has sponsored four community food assessments. These assessments looked at the entire food system in a specific area to determine challenges and opportunities in all components, from food production and processing to food security and access to food, the assessments provide valuable information. For this needs assessment we focused on sections that identified challenges and opportunities for farmers.

There are two community food assessments for Lane County, both focusing in rural areas of the County, including the communities of Florence, Oakridge, the McKenzie River Valley, Creswell, Cottage Grove, Dorena, and Lorane. The Benton and Linn assessments are countywide.

Common themes from community food assessments:

Challenge	Detail of Challenge
Land Access	Finding affordable high value farm land with good soil and irrigation water is a challenge affecting farms of all size, particularly new and beginning farmers.
Capital	New and beginning farmers have difficulty raising capital to buy land and purchase supplies, farm equipment, and/or infrastructure.
Profitability	Financial problems abound for small-scale producers. Farms are supplemented by off-farm income, which takes the farmers away from the land and makes production more difficult.
Certification and Regulations	Being certified can be expensive and reporting is time consuming, however organically certified produce can sell up to double the price of uncertified, even if uncertified producers farm organically. It takes 3 years to transition, which can also cause financial stress.
Changing Climate	Increasing unpredictability of the climate is a challenge. For example, increased rain early in the season can delay planting. Seed growers have trouble with harvesting and drying crops, if early fall rains dampen fields. Water rights have been cut-off to some producers during the irrigation season.

Local Markets	Retail markets, schools and other entities interested in carrying locally sourced products need more farmer support. Farmers and retail managers need to form relationships.
Distribution	Expanding potential markets will require more distribution chains and better communication. In rural areas, there is less demand for local foods because of smaller populations, which makes distribution of local food a challenge. CSAs, food buying clubs and farm stands can all be adapted for distributing food in rural areas.
Cost of Labor & Finding Labor	Labor costs are particularly challenging, and organic production requires a great deal of human labor. Labor laws require minimum wage and insurance. Farm owners often struggle to make ends meet.
Processing and Storage	Many consumers demand food that is ready for consumption at the time of purchase. Lack of small-scale fruit and vegetable processing and limited access to meat processing are challenges faced in getting products to market. There are also limited options for value-added processing. Refrigerated storage for farmers could also store crops and sell locally longer into the season.
Consumer Education	Education is the key to increasing consumer support for local farmers and consumption of local food. It is estimated that only 7% of the food consumed in Benton County is produced locally. In rural Lane County surveys show that consumers do not know where to get local food, they believe local food to be too expensive or they believe that local food is not available in their rural area.

OSU EXTENSION SERVICE LANE COUNTY COMMUNITY NEEDS ASSESSMENT 2012

A needs assessment survey was conducted by the Community Planning Workshop a program of Community Service Center at University of Oregon for the OSU Extension Service in Lane County. The assessment methodology included multiple means of data collection. A survey was distributed to community organizations staff/members, and included questions for all program areas. Local Food Programs and Gardening/Farming Programs were the two areas that were most relevant to SWV SF. At least 50% of respondents considered the following educational programs to be very important and somewhat important:

- Local food producers conference (62%)
- Marketing and Business management for local food producers (70%)
- Understanding the buy local initiative (59%)

Educational programs covering the following topics were ranked very important:

- Invasive species identification and management (56%)
- Pest and weed identification and management (51%)
- Plant disease (47%)
- Livestock and forage production management (46%)
- Agriculture/farm business management (41%)
- Organic agriculture (40%)

FARMER PERSPECTIVES ON SUCCESS AND CHALLENGES: A STUDY OF SMALL FARMS IN OREGON'S WILLAMETTE VALLEY

The 2014 thesis written by Kristin Pool for her Masters of Science in Horticulture includes findings from 53 Willamette Valley farmer interviews and 3 focus groups. All farmers identified their operations as small farms, yet varied in number of acres, experience, and economic status.

The acreage statistics for the participants by primary production type are as follows:

Production Type	Median Acreage	Maximum Acreage	Minimum Acreage
Livestock	48.5	600	5
Annuals	10	170	0.25
Perennials	10	65	1.5

Livestock operations tend to own and/or manage more land than annual and perennial producers because of the high quantity of acreage required for grazing animals.

Top 12 challenges identified as barriers to farm businesses through farmer interviews:

Challenge	Detail of Challenge
Policy and Regulations	Not scale appropriate, time consuming, and expensive. Policies mentioned were the farm bill, subsidies and immigration. Regulations included food safety, zoning and agritourism laws, payroll taxes, and raw milk.
Profitability	Inadequate farmer salary, necessity of off-farm income, and lack of financial stability. Prices are too low to cover full cost of production.
Costs and Investments	Including production costs, investments in equipment, and infrastructure, and the cost of living.
Access to Capital	For land, equipment, infrastructure, and operating expenses. High interest rates, no access to refinancing, perception of small farms limiting access, resulting in slow growth
Quality of Life	Finding the time and energy, maintaining mental and physical health.
Land Access	Increasing price and demand for land, finding appropriate land.
Acquiring Resources and Knowledge	High learning curve, and acquiring land, infrastructure and equipment in startup years. Not being a multi-generation farm.
Marketing and Competition	Marketing the farm business. Educating consumers on products, CSAs, and pricing. Competing against farmers selling at low prices, an increasing number of farms at farmers' markets, and the industrial food system.

Society's Knowledge and Expectations	Consumers understanding of seasonality, price and practices. Consumers' expectations for cheap and convenient food. Need for consumer education. Negative view of farmers.
Diversification, Expansion, and Scale	Balancing the complexity of labor, scale and finances, especially in periods of growth and diversification.
Labor	Finding and retaining capable labor. Dealing with seasonality of work. Paying fair wages. Learning to manage labor.
Production	Weather, pests & diseases, developing systems, and learning truly sustainable production practices.

Production was only identified as a challenge by 21% of farmers. In the interviews farmers mentioned that production was, a larger challenge in the past, but that increased research into organic production had improved production challenges. In the focus groups, it was concluded that not enough farmers are linking production and profitability as strongly as they should. Another insight was that farmers are sacrificing quality of life for production success, perhaps decreasing challenges of production and increasing the incidence of quality of life as a challenge.

Because we are Extension and have appointments primarily related to developing educational programming the following quote from a participant in Pool's study was a highlight and should be given thoughtful consideration.

"I'm trying to be diversified at a small scale and there is a huge amount to learn. So one barrier is my ability to assimilate information. There are a lot of educational opportunities, way too many in fact. I could never go to all of them ... I could be a full time student of farming"

WILLAMETTE WOMEN'S FARM NETWORK SURVEY (WWFN)

In 2012, The SWV SF faculty conducted a survey of the WWFN, a segmented clientele group that is served by the program. Farmer to Farmer networks serve as a way to interact and learn from one another. As a result of participating in the network, farmers indicated they have:

- Increased knowledge 75.4%
- Increased networking 73.8%
- More connection with the farming community 83.1%

A portion of the survey tried to glean information about the timing and types of educational programming for farmers.

The most desired delivery methods were:

- Farm walks to learn about different production systems
- Informational/educational sessions
- Skill building activities

The days and times convenient for programs varied widely. Fifty percent of the respondents indicated that Monday-Thursday afternoon or evenings would work well. Sunday afternoon was specified by

40% of participants as a convenient time. Friday and Saturday were not popular choices (8%), likely because many of the members sell through farmer market venues. However, a large percentage of the respondents say that they prefer a variety of events on different days and times and they will attend when they can. Based on attendance of the WWFN gatherings and compared with the educational topic suggestions in the survey, which reflect the diversity of farming interests and experience levels represented in the WWFN, determining days, times and programs is somewhat random.

NOTEWORTHY ASSESSMENT FROM MEDIA SOURCES

The inability to make a small farm profitable means, that most small farmers must receive income from outside sources, which means they are off the farm more and can produce less.

“Difficulty with making farming profitable, coupled with the lack of access to quality farmland, are the two biggest obstacles to emerging farmers”

Institutions have needs for consistency, quantity of products and distribution networks that local small farmers may not be able or even willing to meet.” [Reynolds, Cottage Grove Sentinel, June 29, 2106]

Farmer interviews *From the Fields*, Exploring Cottage Grove area farms in the south Willamette Valley, Cottage Grove Sentinel, August 20, 2016

- “I love producing food for the people I know, for my community, my family and my neighbors. Farming used to be about sustenance, but then it became a business, and a lot of farmers these days are trying to find the in-between.”
- “Water is the biggest challenge, finding clean, reliable groundwater has been tough.”
- “There’s no specific formula or secret to farming success aside from the time-tested method of keeping animals to consume vegetable waste, then allowing the animals’ waste to fertilize the vegetables”.

KEY PROGRAMS OFFERED IN THE SWV REGION

Melissa, Amy, and Chrissy have been working as a team to serve small farms in this region. Over the years, we have offered a large variety of educational programs. Workshops and field tours have offered landowners focused learning on specific topics, such as pasture poultry production, organic vegetable farming, direct marketing, seed saving, introduction to hoop houses, pasture and grazing systems, agritourism, season extension, rural living, direct marketing and mud management on horse farms. Class series such as the Summer Livestock series in 2012, Pasture and Soil Health Field Tours in 2014 and Winter Farming Series in 2016 have provided deeper learning on similar topics. In addition, we have built curriculum to cover more intensive educational opportunities that are detailed here.

BEGINNING FARMER AND RANCHER EDUCATION PROGRAMS

One area where the OSU SF program has dedicated considerable resources has been developing education programs for new and beginning farmers interested in gaining experience through classes. We began offering Growing Farms in 2009 and now host the series bi-annually with Exploring the Small Farm Dream on alternating years.

Exploring the Small Farm Dream is a 3-part class series that engages landowners or those intending to lease or purchase land who would like to consider what they can grow or produce on a small farm and potentially begin a business.

Growing Farms is a course intended for people in their first 5 years of farming, people seriously considering starting a farm business, and people considering major changes to their farm. This “hybrid” course offers online curriculum with farmer interviews throughout, that is enhanced with both classroom and field sessions taught by OSU faculty, experienced farmers, and other agricultural professionals. Participants gain the skills to assess their resources and develop a whole farm plan. <http://smallfarms.oregonstate.edu/growing-farms-workshop-series>

LIVING ON THE LAND: STEWARDSHIP FOR SMALL ACREAGES

This series is designed for new landowners that want to gain basic knowledge of management practices that promote natural resource stewardship. Coordinated and taught primarily by OSU Extension, Watershed councils and SWCDs have readily participated in funding and co-hosting this series on an annual basis since 2006. The series is anywhere from 4 to 6 classes depending on the partner’s assessment of need in their specific area. Commonly offered sessions are ‘Managing Soil to Keep it Productive’, ‘What to do about Weeds’, ‘Water’, ‘Wells’, and ‘Septic Systems’, ‘Woodlands and Wildlife Habitat’, and ‘Pasture and Grazing Management’. Extensive evaluation has been conducted to illustrate behavior change and implementation of land management practices.

DRY FARMING AND WATER CONSERVATION

Farmers in the in our region are becoming increasingly affected by climate change through reduced snowmelt, increased temperatures, and drought. Up to a 50% reduction in summer water availability is predicted in Oregon within 50 years, and some Oregon vegetable farmers using surface water for irrigation were cut off early during the growing season in 2015.

“Our irrigation from Gales Creek was cut off the last week of June this year. It has never been this early before. We anticipate that early cutoff will become more frequent in coming years, so we would like to be less dependent on our irrigation water rights.” - Forest Grove, Oregon

“For the first time in our 28 years of farming, a water master came to our farm and told us to stop irrigating on Sept. 30 because the irrigation year had legally ended. With traditionally bountiful water little work has been done in the region on growing vegetable crops without water. Solving water issues in the future will require a multifaceted approach. Figuring out what we can grow without supplemental water would seem to be a very important facet.” - Philomath, Oregon

In addition, many new farmers have trouble finding land with unrestricted irrigation rights. It is becoming critical for the viability of farms in our region and the security of our food system to increase our knowledge and awareness of drought mitigation tools and strategies for growing with little or no irrigation. In response to this need, the Dry Farming Project and ‘Growing Resilience: Water Management Workshop Series’ (funded in part by Western SARE and the National Institute for Food and Agriculture Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program) were developed.

The Dry Farming Project initiated in 2013 with several case studies in Western Oregon and Northern California. In 2015 a Dry Farming Demonstration was implemented in Corvallis. In 2016 the project

expanded to three Dry Farming Demonstrations at OSU Extension sites as well as more than ten on-farm trials throughout Western Oregon. The on-farm trials are in partnership with the Dry Farming Collaborative (DFC), which is a group of farmers, extension educators, plant breeders, and agricultural professionals partnering to increase knowledge and awareness of dry farming management practices with a hands-on participatory approach. As of January 2017 the Dry Farming Collaborative is less than one year old and, more than 140 active members in the Facebook group, and more than 80 members on the email list.

The 'Growing Resilience: Water Management Workshop Series' consisted of 8 sessions - 5 seminars (4 video-recorded and available on our website) and 3 Dry Farming Field Days - all on water-related topics in agriculture. This series was designed to increase our knowledge and awareness of how Oregon growers are being affected by drought, expand our toolbox of drought mitigation tools and strategies, and educate agricultural producers and professionals about management practices and strategies for farming with little or no irrigation. <http://smallfarms.oregonstate.edu/dry-farming-demonstration>

WILLAMETTE WOMEN'S FARM NETWORK

Formed in 2008, the WWFN has provided a networking, educational and supportive social experiences for women farmers in the SWV region. The network has provided workshops on issues ranging from tractor driving, chainsaw safety, cooperative marketing to soil test interpretation. This group has evolved over the years and now functions primarily through an email listserv, where members can post questions, products, opportunities, and generally feel like part of a community, which was identified as a top benefit of the network [Needs Assessment 2012]. As of January 2016, there are 178 members.

OSU SMALL FARMS CONFERENCE

In collaboration with the statewide small farms team, an annual day-long conference is offered in Benton County. In recent years, the conference has drawn nearly 1000 participants who attend sessions and network together. Concurrent sessions run throughout the day on topics determined to be needed by the small farm team and conference planning partners. Partner agencies, stakeholders, experienced farmers and others are invited by the team to offer experiences during the conference.

PARTNERS WORKING WITH SMALL FARMS AND LOCAL FOOD COMMUNITY

In the SWV region there are several agencies, non-profit organizations and farms who have identified small farm education, training and technical assistance as program emphasis, whom we consider partners. In an effort not to duplicate effort and best utilize resources, partnering organizations have been interviewed to determine their current areas of interest for small farms programming.

CASCADE PACIFIC RESOURCE CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT (RC&D)

Cascade Pacific RC&D has organized the Local Food Connection, a one day conference to promote relationships between entrepreneurs' that produce, process and purchase and organizations that for advocate for locally grown and processed food. This event has occurred in February on an annual basis and is the only educational or training program for farmers the RC&D is currently involved with. For producers, the most valued aspects of the conference are the facilitated networking session and breakout sessions focused on topics like developing direct to retail accounts and how to sell products to

schools and other institutions. Cascade Pacific could potentially assist with project management and serve as a fiscal agent for partnerships if needed in the future.

In 2014, a Rural Business Enterprise grant was received to offer cooperative development education to local poultry producers, in partnership with the Northwest Cooperative Development Center. A result of the education and development effort was the formation of Heart of the Valley Grower's Cooperative with financial assistance from a USDA Agriculture Marketing Service grant.

Jared Pruch, a project manager with Cascade Pacific RC&D and Board Chairperson for Rogue Farm Corp, shared that there are several partner organizations including McKenzie River Trust, Huerto de la Familia and Eugene Water and Electric Board, interested in developing an incubator farm in Lane County and have been exploring various module and funding options. Pruch cited an incubator farm model collaborative with WSU, Jefferson Lands Work, Craft3 Land Trust, local Soil and Water Conservation Districts and a local food co-op that seems to be successful. Reliable funding is the biggest challenge with starting and maintaining a farm incubator project. Potentially, the RC&D could serve as a fiscal sponsor for grant funds and/or employing a coordinator.

EUGENE WATER & ELECTRIC BOARD (EWEB)

EWEB and the SWV Small Farms program have collaborated on programs in conjunction with Cascade Pacific RC&D and other partners. EWEB encourages best management practices in the McKenzie River watershed, the City of Eugene's drinking water source. They have supported program efforts such as the 2015 McKenzie River Equipment Sharing Feasibility Study and has interest in Living on the Land series in 2017. EWEB plans to launch an incentive based program, Pure Partners, a new water source protection strategy that will reward rural landowners who maintain high quality land along the river, helping to protect water quality in the McKenzie River watershed and avoid future water treatment costs.

SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICTS (SWCD)

The Benton, Linn and Upper Willamette (Lane) Soil and Water Conservation Districts have been partners in education and outreach to small acreage farms for many years. Program emphasis differ with each county, however the theme of natural resources conservation including protecting water quality and soil health are prominent programs. Each SWCD receives funding from Oregon Department of Agriculture for education and technical expertise that support the region's Agriculture Water Quality Plans. SWCDs and some watershed councils work closely together on invasive weed removal and native riparian planting projects. The SWV Small Farms program has a positive working relationship with each of the SWCD programs in the region. All three SWCDs request to partner with Extension on the Living on the Land series.

Upper Willamette SWCD has focus areas in Lane County where they are currently providing outreach and technical assistance. Gettings Creek watershed in the Cottage Grove/Creswell area and the S. Fork Siuslaw near Lorane are areas where the SWCD is holding public meetings and encouraging landowners to implement voluntary actions including livestock exclusion and vegetation management in riparian zones. A new non-profit organization, the Willamette Valley Clean Water Alliance, is working with the SWCD to look at funding opportunities to educate landowners and youth about environmental conservation. Another service the SWCD provides to landowners is a soil sampling program. For a fee, soil samples will be shipped, analyzed and results summarized.

Benton SWCD is actively engaged in educational programs. Soil health has been a program emphasis where they have been successful in securing funds for on-farm soil health evaluation, train-the-trainer events and landowner workshops. Irrigation management, small-acreage stewardship, agroforestry, streamside enhancement, and urban farming are also of interest to Benton SWCD staff who actively seek funding for landowner programming.

Linn SWCD tends to focus on larger scale agriculture supporting soil and water quality programs for grass seed and other field crop farms. They also receive and respond to inquiries for technical assistance from small-scale agriculture primarily for manure management, streamside restoration and other land management projects.

NATURAL RESOURCE CONSERVATION DISTRICT (NRCS)

NRCS offices in each of the counties work to develop conservation plans for farmers and ranchers that successfully receive funding through their Federal programs. Some small farms in this region have received funding through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP). Priorities for this program change based on local need. In recent years, one priority has been funding projects for local food producers that direct market crops to consumers, no more than 50 miles from the farm. Small farms have also benefited from NRCS funds designated for constructing high tunnels as part of the season extension and local food production initiative.

HUERTO DE LA FAMILIA

With the goal of increasing the health and economic self-sufficiency of Latinos in Lane County, Huerto de la Familia has been providing opportunities and training in organic agriculture and business creation education to Spanish speaking participants. The SWV SF program has provided support for their programming, from teaching classes to writing letters of support. Language barriers have been a challenge, but translation has been accommodating. With the 2016 hire of Javier Salvador-Fernandez, OSU Extension Small Farms faculty who serves Marion and Polk counties, the cultural and language barriers have been reduced. Javier is now working with Huerto and other Latino farmer organizations to build partner connections and is planning to conduct a needs assessment for Spanish speakers in 2017-18, and will share that data.

WILLAMETTE FARM AND FOOD COALITION (WWFC)

Located in Lane County, the WWFC is a non-profit organization that has a rich history of promoting a local food community to support farmers, educate consumers, work with Farm to School programming and address issues related to food access. In 2016, the organization addressed changes for their mission. For example, WWFC no longer leading Farm to School efforts, as school districts are now beginning to lead the efforts themselves, which per executive director, Lynne Fessenden, is a success. They hope to continue to support institutional buyers with local food procurement.

The Locally Grown Food Guide, an annual publication that highlights farms and companies that promote locally grown and processed foods, has been one of the WWFC's signature projects. The guide has become a platform to work towards branding and trademarking Willamette Valley Grown and Crafted, and effort that will transition to another partner, the Willamette Valley Sustainability Alliance.

Yet, another success that originated with WWFC is the Southern Willamette Bean and Grain Project which started with a few growers to address growing, processing, marketing and distribution of local grown dried beans and grains. The farmers have networked together to get the support needed to grow the crops, two mills have been constructed for processing, Green Willow Grains in Halsey and Camas Country Mills in Junction City. Camas Country Mills has expansion plans to increase their capacity to process more product as now supply cannot meet the demand. Hummingbird Wholesale is active in regional distribution of the products, which includes selling to Bob's Killer Breads of Portland.

WWFC is now planning to focus their efforts on food equity including access to locally grown food for limited income families. Promotion and education through the WIC program focusing on shopping at farmer's markets and cooking demonstrations as well as efforts to continue funding of Food Bucks are two examples of how they are shaping a multi-faceted program with partners such as Lane County Public Health.

CORVALLIS ENVIRONMENTAL CENTER (CEC)

The CEC is involved with Farm to School programming in Benton County and coordinates tasting tables with small farms in school lunchrooms and acts as a liaison for schools trying to source local produce for their harvest of the month program. CEC is also piloting a workplace produce stand featuring fresh local produce from local farms at Good Samaritan Hospital and plans to expand to other venues next year. A Specialty Crop Block Grant funded a project 2014-2016 provided funding to address production, marketing, financial, and legal risks small and beginning produce farmers face in marketing to institutions. There are no plans to continue this work beyond the scope of the current grant.

TEN RIVERS FOOD WEB (TRFW)

Ten Rivers has three focus areas that they define as Real Food, Food Distribution, and Food Land. Two of their main events each year include the Fill Your Pantry event and the Soil Amendment Sale. Ten Rivers expanded its mission in 2016 to acquire and hold food land in perpetuity within a public benefit land trust. This Community Food Land Trust (CFLT) provides new farmers affordable access to food production land. It also provides a direct means for the local community to support and enhance a durable food system. They define Food Land as acreage that produces plant-based and animal-based food for human consumption. An area of particular importance they note is plant-based food nutrition for humans, animals, and soil. Harry MacCormack notes, "Food as medicine is an area we should all focus on - we are what we eat." There is an 80-page document available on their website, "Nutrition: Assessing Plant-Based Foods for Humans and Animals". An assessment on animal-based foods is anticipated to be released in 2017.

FRIENDS OF FAMILY FARMERS (FOFF)

FoFF has a vision to build a strong and united voice for Oregon's independent family farmers, food advocates, and concerned citizens who are working to foster an approach to agriculture that respects the land, treats animals humanely, sustains local communities, and provides a viable livelihood for family farmers.

- Oregon Farm Link (formerly iFarm) is one of their main projects that connects land seekers with land-holders to help Oregon grow the next generation of family farmers. Their website (<http://oregonfarmlink.org/>) has been revamped recently and includes agricultural job postings

as well. They will host 6 Farm Link events throughout the state this winter 2016/2017 including Yamhill, Marion, and Lane County.

- AggieBonds is a beginning farmer and rancher loan program available in Oregon but has had more success in Washington. Friends of Family farmers is working to revamp this program in Oregon and develop it so that more farmers can take advantage of this opportunity.
- Farmers Rising is an annual educational and networking event for beginning farmers that takes place in Lane County.
- The Agricultural Reclamation Act (ARA) is the result of a two-year process of talking to Oregon's farmers and ranchers, bringing communities together, and encouraging democratic participation. The ARA is a document that is updated via listening sessions around the state and by discussions with and surveys from Oregon farmers and ranchers.
- InFarmation - Friends of Family Farmers started to offer this educational event in Eugene in 2016 (<http://www.friendsoffamilyfarmers.org/eaters/infarmation/eugene/>). InFarmation is about bringing the issues that Oregon family farmers face onto the radar of urban consumers and the community in general. Changing monthly, the topic always focuses on the larger picture of the connection between food and farms in Oregon. "When eaters connect with farmers, it makes our food web stronger and makes real changes in our local food system possible."

WATERSHED COUNCILS

Watershed Councils are locally organized, voluntary, non-regulatory groups established to improve the condition of watersheds in their local area. In the SWV region there are eleven watershed councils including Mary's River, Alsea Basin, Luckiamute, Calapooia, North Santiam, South Santiam, Mckenzie River, Long Tom, Siuslaw, Coast Fork Willamette, and Middle Fork Willamette. Councils work with local government and stakeholders including public and private land managers, including small acreage landowners and farmers to develop and implement projects to maintain and restore the biological and physical processes in the watersheds. Education and outreach efforts tend to center around restoration projects including noxious weed removal, native plantings, in-stream fish passage, and wildlife and prairie enhancement. The SWV SF program has been a partner with several watershed councils to offer Living on the Land and adapted the series to include materials based on their educational priorities.

LINN BENTON FOOD SHARE (LBFS)

LBFS supports small farms through their Intentional Production program. Historically, farmers donate food to the food bank at the end of the season, therefore the product has a less than optimal shelf life. The Intentional Production program allows LBFS to work with farmers up-front to actually purchase the freshest produce during the growing season, allowing families, who otherwise could not afford local, organically grown fruits and vegetables, receive them. In addition, contracting with local, small farms put dollars that would otherwise be spent on out-of-state food acquisition back into the local food economy. LBFS tries to contract with farmers who have been farming 5 years or less to provide some support for the next generation of farmers. There are 3 Benton County farms and 2 Linn County farms that they contracted within 2016.

LBFS would like to continue and possibly expand the Intentional Production model to connect local small farms with individual food pantries. It would be helpful to have more knowledge and outreach to the small farm community to engage in either the intentional production program or donate product. The LBFS Farm Project in Albany really benefitted from the expertise and time given from the SWV SF

staff as they began intentionally growing produce for their program at the Albany Helping Hands farm site. A possible partnership with Corvallis Environmental Center/SAGE garden may allow for more volunteer hours for this specific project. There is also interest in transforming land owned by LBFS adjacent to their warehouse in Tangent into a demonstration or working farm. They would like to explore this opportunity in the future.

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS FOR NON-FARMERS

The SWV SF program focuses efforts for small-scale farm businesses, landowners, and homestead farms. Often SF program staff are called upon to share expertise and develop programs for home gardeners, degree seeking students and farm interns. As part of this assessment, programs that focus efforts on these clientele are featured, indicating that programming already exists.

PROGRAMS FOR HOME GARDENERS

There is some crossover amongst landowners between the community horticulture and small farm program, but for the most part, small farms serve people that are marketing products they have grown or produced and/or have acreage primarily outside the urban growth boundary.

The OSU Extension Community Horticulture program offers a Master Gardener training series for 8 weeks, each year in two locations, Lane and Linn (also serves Benton) counties to teach the basics of gardening including food gardens and landscaping. These series are typically offered on weekdays and attended by a variety of participants interested in learning and volunteering. We partner by teaching the soils class for the training program and try to limit involvement to that support.

Seed to Supper is a free 6-week basic gardening program for low-income adult learners that teaches participants how to grow vegetables on a budget. This program is offered in partnership with trained Master Gardener volunteers and the Oregon Food Bank. In Benton and Linn County the Master Gardener program hosts the Seed to Supper classes. In Lane, Food for Lane County coordinates the effort and Master Gardeners and other community groups host the classes in various sites.

Specialized classes on composting, pruning, and other topics and extensive community garden support are offered by Community Horticulture program and their trained volunteers.

HANDS-ON LEARNING PROGRAMS FOR ENROLLED STUDENTS

In the SWV region, there are two state universities and two community colleges, each of which has agriculture, farming, gardening or sustainable living curriculum. In addition, each school offers hands-on learning through clubs and garden programs. Students interested in food and farming have several programs to choose from.

OSU ORGANIC GROWERS CLUB is an all-volunteer, student-run, organic farming project. The group was started by students who felt that at some point in their academic careers, they should put a seed in the ground, take care of it, and harvest the benefits of that effort. The group and the farm have grown into a forward thinking "community of students, staff, and faculty that have a common interest in food, fun, and above all experiencing the reality that is ecosystem sustenance". They have a 2-acre garden at the OSU Vegetable Research Farm and plots at Oak Creek Center for Urban Horticulture

where they grow produce and market on campus including a CSA. http://cropandsoil.oregonstate.edu/organic_grower

PROFITABLE SMALL FARMS is a program offered through Linn-Benton Community College for enrolled students starting their college education, students who already possess a higher education degree, and mid-career changers. Profitable Small Farms combines hands-on learning and classroom teaching to develop the skills to start a small farm. The program has a dual focus on the technical skills to produce food sustainably with minimal negative environmental impacts and the entrepreneurial skills to develop and manage a community-based agricultural business. The program starts in the fall and continues through the summer for students to experience a full year of small farm management. <https://www.linnbenton.edu/current-students/student-support/instructional-departments/agricultural-sciences-department/degrees/profitable-small-farms>

LANE COMMUNITY COLLEGE'S LEARNING GARDEN, part of the Institute for Sustainable Practices is a student-led initiative that grows healthy, sustainable food for our campus community while providing learning, service, and leadership opportunities for students. The Learning Garden offers students the opportunity to work with others outside the classroom and network. Organic vegetables grown in the garden are used in the student-run restaurant, the Culinary Arts and Hospitality Management Program special events, and the cafeteria. Learning Garden volunteers may qualify for work study, internships, or service learning credit from specific faculty who support the garden with their curriculum. <https://www.lanecollege.edu/sustainability/learning-garden-club>

UNIVERSITY OF OREGON'S URBAN FARM is a model for productive urban land use where people grow food, work together, take care of the land, and build community. The goal of the Urban Farm is to teach students how to learn about nature through working. The class is offered spring, summer and fall terms. The activities of the Farm vary seasonally but are primarily hands-on with some lectures and field trips. <http://blogs.uoregon.edu/urbanfarm/>

FARM INTERNSHIPS AND TRAINING

Many aspiring farmers value hands-on learning and desire the practical knowledge that can be gained by living and working on an operating farm or rural business. People interested in these types of immersion programs have options in the SWV.

In Oregon, on-farm internships can be complicated. Oregon employment laws require minimum wage payment for farm employees, including interns. Stipends or offering room and board instead of a hourly wage, may violate these laws. Employment insurances and taxes must also be factored in. However, internships are one of the best ways for people interested in starting a farm to really learn what they are getting into.

There have been farms in the SWV region that have dealt with lawsuits from interns who have felt taken advantage of and so we encourage attentiveness to these issues. Even so, there are private farms that advertise and offer internships without meeting the minimum wage rules because of their need for labor during the growing season. There are also aspiring farmers who crave this sort of immersion education and willingly want to work, indicating they are not concerned about labor laws.

A number of farms also participate in the World Wide Opportunities Organic Farms (WWOOF) which is a program that connects people seeking farm living experience for weeks to months at a time with

farms that are seeking free labor for short periods of time through a web-based database. This program is technically illegal in Oregon, as well, though for the most part not regulated. <http://www.wwoof.net/>

SOUTHERN WILLAMETTE CHAPTER of ROGUE FARM CORPS internship program is a non-profit organization based in southern Oregon. Rogue Farm Corps started the Southern Willamette chapter in 2014 and coordinates internship experiences. This internship program recruits commercial small farms to host interns from March through October each year. Recruitment begins in the fall for the following year's growing season. Recruiting interns begins in the early winter and then the placement process on participating farms begins. There is still hourly wage, stipends and/or room and board requirements for this program. Farm Corps handles the logistics of recruiting, placements, and financial payments made by both parties and ensures that interns receive appropriate educational training to qualify as an intern program. The training opportunities include workshops, farm tours and networking between the cohort of interns in the region. We collaborats by serving on the education committee for Farm Corps, assists with farmer and intern recruitment, and teaches the Soils and Basic Horticulture workshop sessions. There are two programs offered, Farm Next! and Farm Now!
<http://www.roguefarmcorps.org/programs/>

APROVECHO SUSTAINABILITY EDUCATION CENTER <http://www.aprovecho.net/> and LOST VALLEY EDUCATION CENTER <http://lostvalley.org/>, also non-profits located in Lane County and are essentially learning education centers for people to live and learn about sustainable community living, gardening and farming on rural land. The SWV SF program is not directly involved with these programs, however we have been contacted by both of these centers in recent years to talk about potential partnerships.

SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

Financial and business planning is a known need for small farm businesses and is strongly connected to the profitability of small farms. There are multiple programs in the SWV region for farmers to access help for business planning and the OSU Extension Small Farms program is addressing this need on a statewide level.

Small Business Development Centers which are affiliated with community colleges offer comprehensive programs that guide owners through business plan development. Neighborhood Economic Development Corp (NEDCO) in Lane County supports Community LendingWorks, which supports small businesses through planning and innovative loan options. Partners such as these also provide access to Individual Development Accounts (IDA).

The statewide OSU Extension Small Farms program, in partnership with Oregon Tilth, has been leading a profitability cost study working directly with diversified vegetable farms in the Willamette Valley. Through this study educational materials are being developed to continue to support small farms business success.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE SWV PROGRAM

As a result of the data review, community partner and farmer interviews and focus groups, several opportunities have been identified as potential work areas.

NEW AND BEGINNING FARMERS: FARM INCUBATOR PROJECT

A program that is not currently available in the SWV region is an incubator farm experience. Incubator farms offer new or aspiring farmers, who are not interested in internships, space where they can gain hands-on education. There are many ways to develop program that meet these needs, from leasing small plots of land to organized events at a site during the growing season for small group learning and hands-on experience. Incubator programs typically involve planning, production, and marketing education. Partners in Lane County, including Cascade Pacific RC&D, EWEB, Huerto de la Familia, and McKenzie River Trust have identified a potential site for an incubator farm.

If or when a farm incubator program is developed for Lane County, Jared Pruch with Cascade Pacific RC&D envisions the OSU Extension SF program as an educational partner. An important role in this collaboration could be assisting farmers in vetting business plans, which aids in farm viability including profitability.

PROFITABILITY AND BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

Farm to School funding offered through Oregon Department of Education is currently available to school districts through a non-competitive grant program. Schools interested in purchasing from local small farms have challenges connecting with farms and working out details like delivery and quantity of produce. If small farms in the SWV are interested in selling to institutions such as schools, there is opportunity to work one-on-one or develop a program that would help farmers prepare for this type of wholesale market.

Willamette Farm and Food Coalition's Lynne Fessenden encourages the SWV SF program to give some time to helping farmers and institutions figure out how to work with each other. It takes some hand holding and legwork to work on contracts. For example, the University of Oregon has interest in buying from or forward contracting with smaller producers for local food, but it will take staff time to make it happen. Another issue as Fessenden explains is that if the Uof O wanted to source all their produce locally, farmers could not supply it. Are there farmers who would be able to focus on growing larger quantities of 4 or 5 crops? Another interesting question posed, "is there a niche for small farms to aggregate to sell to smaller restaurants and grocers who are interested in sourcing local product but can't meet minimum order requirements from distributors?"

One role that the CEC identified that OSU Extension Small Farms Program could fill is in creating some viable food hub or aggregation service for small farms as a means of accessing institutional markets. County Community Food Assessments identified opportunities that include:

- Feasibility study for a local food aggregator/distribution system
- Feasibility study for scale-appropriate processing
- Assisting institutional buyers. Connecting with farmers, understanding policies and procedures, and working through standard distribution models are barriers, so supporting institutions to navigate this process would increase the purchases of local food.

Growing Farms modules “Manage It” and “Keep It” could be revised to incorporate more business planning comments that could lead to development of a business plan.

Agritourism business development is a potential way for small farms to diversify income on working farms and ranches and could lead to sustainable profitability. OSU Extension Service and Travel Oregon are exploring a new partnership that may lead to funding new Extension positions that would focus on rural tourism and agritourism. Small-scale farms that are interested in developing an agritourism business will likely need assistance in navigating barriers such as land-use, permitting, time management, marketing, and hospitality.

The SWV SF advisory committee and other community partners identified Extension as being helpful in assisting small farms in preparation and planning for the Food Safety Modernization Act.

CHANGING CLIMATE AND LIMITED IRRIGATION WATER

There is an opportunity to continue and potentially expand our program with the Dry Farming Collaborative (DFC) in response to the ongoing challenges related to access to land with water rights for irrigating crops and concerns about water availability with a changing climate. This idea is supported by partners such as Friends of Family Farmers who identified a role for the SWV SF program to develop programming on water resource management to assist small farmers in planning for and responding to seasons of drought. Plans for this project include:

- Facilitate farmer-to-farmer information sharing within DFC and with climate scientists with multiple communication channels and events.
- Conduct and facilitate on-farm field trials with the DFC.
- Create data repository and user-interface to streamline data collection and analysis – input, search, visualization, statistics.
- Allow for different levels of involvement – Replication and/or Experimental.
- Develop Dry Farming page on OSU Small Farms website to be a resource hub for dry farming in our region.
- Initiate participatory plant breeding project for dry farmed systems with the DFC.
- Initiate ‘Dry Farming in the maritime Pacific Northwest’ extension publication series with decision-making tools and resources for growers new to dry farming as well as case study reports and story mapping with 2016 and 2017 DFC trial results.
- Develop a guide on how to put together participatory climate adaptation research projects for others in our region and beyond.
- Develop Dry Farming page on the OSU Small Farms website to be a resource hub for dry farming in the Northwestern U.S. as well as scientifically-based information on climate adaptation and mitigation tools.

SMALL ACREAGE AND HOMESTEAD FARMS

The Living on the Land class series continues to be relevant to landowners across the region. Benton SWCD would like to partner to co-host a Living on the Land program that would incorporate the Rural Living Handbook. EWEB is interested in partnering to offer the series in the McKenzie River watershed

potentially in 2017 or 2018. This program is a way to engage and provide education about land management practices to small-acreage landowners. Nitrate screenings for well water are an effective learning tool that should be offered within these programs.

PROGRAM DELIVERY

There is opportunity to evaluate program delivery and effectiveness through a survey that will be completed, as part of this needs assessment. Technology including social media are increasing engagement and improving access to educational materials. However, the SWV SF advisory council and prior assessment data show that providing field consultation with individual farmers and landowners should be an area to focus delivery efforts (2012 Lane County assessment). One-on-one education delivery is a valuable service that the SWV SF program can provide.

SURVEY OF FARMERS, RANCHERS AND LANDOWNERS

A survey questionnaire was developed, piloted and disseminated to farmers, ranchers, and landowners in the region. The survey was administered using a web-based program (Qualtrics, Provo, UT), and accepted responses from February 23, 2017 to May 31, 2017, approximately three months. During this time, notices about the survey were distributed via social media, electronic and printed newsletters, direct emails, press releases, flyers and handouts. Significant efforts were taken to reach those who may not have been familiar with OSU Extension Service.

The overarching request for input asked participants to respond to the question, "What would you like us to work on next?" The survey had 249 respondents that shared basic demographic information, preferences for learning and communication, addressed an open ended question, "What do you need to learn or be able to do, so that you can be a more successful farmer/rancher/landowner?" and provided their interest level in a variety of potential program areas.

To maximize efficiency and try to best serve small farm clientele in amongst our partners, effort was made to reach out to several colleagues and new faculty serving the same audience. A block of questions that participants were able to respond to, if interested, were included for Forestry Extension, Livestock and Forages Extension and the USDA NW Climate Hub.

DEMOGRAPHICS

An evaluation of survey results showed that the process of developing and disseminating the survey yielded in the targeted clientele participating. Forty-nine percent of the respondents identified themselves as a farmer/rancher, 33% as a landowner, and 13% selected "other". The other category allowed for input and the majority self-identified as "hobby farmers" or hoping/planning to farm in the future. Respondents were able to select more than one identifier. 95% indicated that they currently own a small-acreage farm:

FARM ACREAGE	% OF RESPONDENTS
Less than 5 acres	25%
6 to 10 acres	18%
11 to 20 acres	20%
21 to 50 acres	20%
More than 50 acres	20%

The respondents have a wide span of farming experience:

YEARS OF EXPERIENCE	% OF RESPONDENTS
Haven't started yet	8%
Less than 5 years	31%
6 to 10 years	18%
11 to 20 years	17%
More than 20 years	22%

The respondents represent highly diversified farms leading to multiple programming interests:

GROWN OR RAISED	% OF RESPONDENTS
Vegetables	58%
Tree fruits or nuts	53%
Berries or grapes	45%
Poultry for eggs	41%
Pasture, forage or hay	40%
Herbs	32%
Other	28%
Cut flowers	19%
Meat goats or sheep	19%
Beef cattle	17%
Horses	17%
Poultry for meat	14%

Swine	12%
Dairy goats or sheep	12%
Llamas or alpacas	5%
Dairy cattle	3%

The 28% of respondents that selected “other” indicated woodlots, Christmas trees rabbits, grains, specialty seeds, hops and bees as enterprises.

Since the respondents represent the scale, wide-range of expertise and multiplicity of enterprises, we are confident that the programmatic data from the survey will provide valid needs of their clientele.

PROGRAM AND INFORMATION DELIVERY

Every county Extension office seems to ponder the best way to communicate with clientele, how to best utilize social media and create a balance that reaches a majority. As educators, working with adults, we also try to attend to differing learning styles the following questions were included to try to identify preferences to be used for program and information delivery.

When asked how you prefer learn about new topics or skills, respondents shared that the most preferred methods are:

- On my own by reading, online searches and other research
- One-on-one conversation with an expert
- Workshops, classes or conferences

Other options provided were small groups, field tours, online videos/webinars and hybrid courses.

When presented with non-traditional educational delivery methods, the top preferences are:

- Farmer to farmer information sharing platforms
- Networking events
- Skill building activities

Respondents with less than 5 years of experience were more interested in skill building activities than farmers with more experience. Discussion lists a were of interest to more experienced farmers, and could also facilitate farmer-to farmer networking. Collaborative and participatory research is also valued by small-scale farmers.

The SWV Small Farms program has been sending a monthly e-newsletter to an email list since 2013 and serves the major form of communication between our program and clientele. The statewide, Oregon Small Farms News is published quarterly and county based e-newsletters are now also utilized. In the survey, e-newsletters and email were preferred methods of communication. Facebook was ranked 2nd. Direct emails and printed newsletters were specified by respondents in the “other” category. Twitter is not a preferred method of communication.

WHAT DO YOU FEEL YOU NEED TO LEARN OR BE ABLE TO DO, SO THAT YOU CAN BE A MORE SUCCESSFUL FARMER/RANCHER/LANDOWNER?

In the survey, before providing ideas and prompts for educational topics that may be of interest to participants, an open-ended question was asked to have respondents self-identify educational needs that would help them feel more successful. Responses to this question overwhelmingly affirmed the major categories in the survey (Production, Business Development and Management and Natural Resource Management). Some responses will require direct communication with the respondent, so we are hopeful that they will reach out to our local program. A majority of the needs will be addressed through development of educational materials and programs and in some cases the resources already exist. Available resources may be highlighted in newsletters and other forms of media.

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM TOPIC AREAS

Addressing educational program needs for small farms can be challenging because of the diversity of enterprises. The survey provided program options in three broad categories: 1. Production, 2. Business Development and Management and 3. Natural Resource management and gave options for topics based on our expertise or could provide through partnerships. An “other” option was also available for specific topics that were not listed.

PRODUCTION TOPICS	% OF RESPONDENTS
Pasture and grazing management	56%
Tree fruits and nuts	51%
Integrated Pest Management (IPM)	45%
Winter farming, season extension	44%
Berries or grapes	41%
Dry farming practices (growing crops without irrigation)	37%
Diversified vegetable production	35%
Medicinal herbs	33%
Organic certification or methods	28%
Agro-forestry	27%
Small grains	17%
Other	13%

Other production topics that were identified specifically by respondents included small-scale dairy, woodland/forestry, hops and cider apples and mushrooms.

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT AND MANAGEMENT TOPICS	% OF RESPONDENTS
Cost of production and record keeping	52%
Marketing to direct to consumers	45%
Value-added product development	39%
Taxes	38%
Food safety regulations	34%
Land succession/transition	32%
Agritourism	30%
Land leasing relationships	23%
Marketing to institutions	19%
Other	7%

Other business development topics that were identified specifically by respondents included farm stand sales, transition to commercial organic, cooperatives and partnership relationships.

NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT TOPICS	% OF RESPONDENTS
Soil health	71%
Weed management	68%
Manure and mud management	47%
Soil testing	45%
Climate change adaptation	42%
Water quality	39%
Other	7%

Other natural resource topics that were identified specifically by respondents included wildlife habitat and management, agro-forestry, how to weather the storms (snow, wind, rain, drought), storing rainwater safely for irrigation.

FOCUS AREAS FOR PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

We have been exploring three major focus areas and wanted to gauge the interest level for these projects from the small scale agriculture community. The three focus areas, agritourism, dry farming and selling to institutions would all require significant staffing allocation, building of strategic partnerships and possibly, external funding. All three projects areas have potential financial impact for small farms.

AGRITOURISM is a potential way to diversify income. Agritourism includes hosting visitors on the farm or ranch to purchase farm products, participate in educational or social events, or perhaps stay overnight, and other activities. Participants were asked if they current have or are considering starting an agritourism business.

Yes 25%
 No 51%
 Maybe 24%

If respondents answered yes or maybe, an additional question was asked to determine which steps of business development they could use help with.

AGRITOURISM BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT STEP	% OF RESPONDENTS
Addressing visitor safety and farm liability	75%
Understanding land use and zoning rules	65%
Information about health codes, building codes, etc.	65%
Getting started and developing a plan	61%
Effective marketing	50%
Working with county planners	45%
Networking and making connections with other agritourism businesses	40%
Hospitality training	18%
Other	8%

Other topics identified by respondents where help is needed were bird watching and bicycle tourism plans, financing, using animals for therapy on farms, legislation that makes agritourism impossible, and county/state/federal regulations that negate each other.

DRY FARMING or producing fruit and vegetable crops without supplemental irrigation in the Willamette Valley is another focus area. Participants were asked if they are interested in learning more about producing fruits and vegetables without irrigation during the growing season.

Yes 60%
 No 21%
 Maybe 19%

If respondents answered yes or maybe, they were give opportunity to give their input with three additional questions.

FARM SITUATION DESCRIPTION	% OF RESPONDENTS
On land without water rights	38%
Have limited water rights	17%
Have water rights	38%
Irrigation has been restricted during the growing season on more than one occasion	5%
Well ran dry in the 2015 drought	2%

Participatory research seems to be an effective way to collect data about varietal selection, production and yields in varying soil types and conditions in the Willamette Valley. Participants were asked if they would be like to be involved in a participatory dry farming research project.

Yes 22%
 No 50%
 Maybe 28%

Based on the broad interest in the dry farming project, respondents indicated which resources would be most helpful should they try to grow crops without irrigation.

RESOURCE	% OF RESPONDENTS
Soil preparation and planting	65%
Strategies for building and conserving soil water-holding capacity	64%
Crop varietal selection	63%
Site assessment and selection	49%
Dry farming case studies	32%
Plant breeding for dry farmed systems	30%
Other	8%

Other resources that were identified specifically were rainwater catchment, legalities of saving or containing winter water, on-site learning, plant evaluation to prevent water stress, dry farming information for orchards, potatoes, and animal forage crops.

SELLING TO INSTITUTIONS, selling farm products to institutions such as schools, hospitals, retirement communities are opportunities to increase revenue and further strengthen the local community food system. Survey participants were asked if they were interested in exploring the possibility of production foods to this type of market.

Yes 34%

No 36%
Maybe 29%

If respondents answered yes or maybe, they were offered additional questions.

There can be challenges selling to schools and other institutions. Respondents were asked in which areas assistance may be needed in developing this market.

CHALLENGE	% OF RESPONDENTS
Getting started, making connections	67%
Price point for this market	61%
Developing direct relationships with schools and other institutions	50%
Distribution of your products	42%
Scaling up production	35%
Labor needs for increased production	25%
Other	17%

Other challenges that were identified specifically were USDA rules and regulations, insurance, food handler and food safety requirements, figuring out what to grow, packaging, cold storage, pasteurizing eggs, seasonality of products, and transporting products.

Essentially, producers would be scaling up to sell their farm products to a wholesale market. Respondents were asked to identify specific crops they could grow or raise in some quantity. Items commonly identified by multiple respondents were meat (beef, pork, lamb), poultry, eggs, hazelnuts, winter squash, root crops (potatoes, carrots, beets), alliums (onions, garlic shallots), greens (kale, lettuce), apples, berries, herbs, tomatoes, and peppers. Other crops mentioned were mushrooms, grains, melons, broccoli, pears, beans, peas, and corn.

QUESTIONS FROM PARTNERS

Respondents had the opportunity to answer survey questions to assist Forestry Extension, Livestock and Forages Extension and the USDA NW Climate Hub to assist in develop useful programming.

54% of respondents answered questions pertaining to the Woodland, Forestry and Natural Resource program.

56% of respondents answered questions pertaining to the Livestock and Forages program.

60% of respondents provided opinions pertaining to the climate change for the NW Climate Hub.

The high percentage of small-scale farmers and ranchers that were interested in these program areas indicate opportunities to collaborate, as we are often focusing outreach to the same clientele. The survey data for these blocks of questions were distributed to our partners.

PRIORITIZING NEEDS AND NEXT STEPS

After reviewing all of the collected data, within the next five years, we will offer programming that will address the top educational needs in each category through preferred learning methods. We will develop resources that are readily available and searchable online such as fact sheets, frequently asked questions and peer-reviewed publications. Classes, workshops and conference sessions will be coordinated to address topics in which more than 40% of the survey respondents selected as an educational need. Pasture and Grazing management is a high priority and affects a large number of landowners in our region. We will explore volunteer training programs that may allow for additional on-site farm visits to directly assist landowners with these needs.

Of the focus areas, the Dry Farming project which is already in motion, will move forward to develop an Extension publication series that will include topics like soil preparation and planting, site assessment and selection, and crop varietal selection. Efforts will continue to support a collaborative learning network that may lead to additional participatory research projects.

Farm to Institution marketing is a focus area that will require coordination between farms and buyers on a personal level. The survey identified crops that farmers indicated could be grown at a price point that may be affordable for this wholesale market. A next step for this focus area will be identifying school districts and other institutions that may have interest in these specific crops and begin making connections with growers. Since the Oregon Department of Education Farm to School funding was recently approved by Oregon legislature, there is opportunity to develop opportunities, as schools may have access to additional funding for purchases.

The greatest needs associated with Agritourism Business Development are centered on liability, land use regulation and county and state licensing and codes. As staff time allows, we will determine how to address these issues with farms in the southern Willamette Valley region. As these topics are related to policy and regulations, and may differ by county based on interpretation, interviews with county planning staff may be useful and result in a series of fact sheets.

Data from this needs assessment will also be utilized as a resource when seeking external funding to enhance program development.

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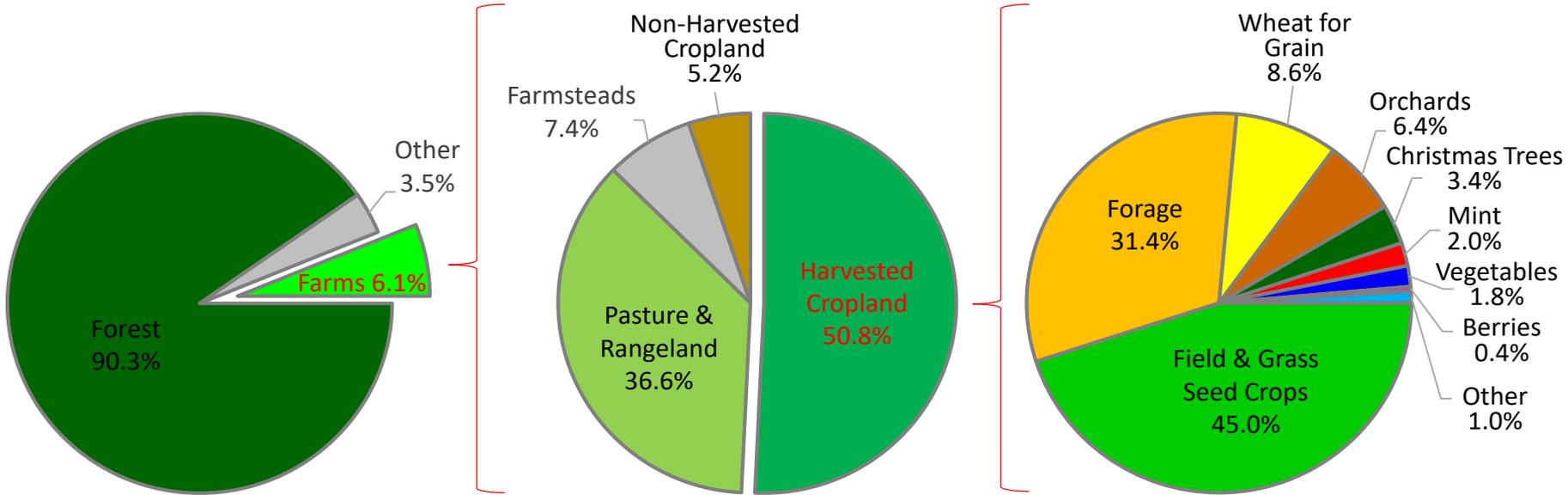
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Harvested Cropland in Lane County



Lane County Land Use

Land Use	Acres	Source
Forest	2632000	OFRI, 2015
Farms (excluding woodland)	178712	USDA, 2012
Other (e.g., cities)	103291	calculated
Total Land Area	2914003	USDA, 2012

Lane County Land in Farms

Land Use	Acres
Harvested Cropland	90704
Pasture & Rangeland	65413
Land in Farmsteads	13274
Non-Harvested Cropland	9321
Total Land in Farms	178712

Source: USDA, 2012 Census of Ag.

Lane County Harvested Cropland

Crop	Acres	Farms	Average Acres/Farm
Field and Grass Seed Crops	40820	45	907
Forage	28516	921	31
Wheat for Grain	7834	42	187
Orchards	5824	376	15
Christmas Trees	3044	116	26
Mint	1787	12	149
Vegetables	1600	168	10
Berries	345	193	2
Other	934	N/A	N/A
Total	90704	1603	57

Source: USDA, 2012 Census of Agriculture