

impact

University of Idaho Extension programs that are making a difference in Idaho.

Cultivating Success™ webinar series delivers statewide small farm education

AT A GLANCE

Statewide webinar series provides information on priority topics to 172 small farmers and technical assistance providers across Idaho.

The Situation

Small farms and ranches across Idaho are growing in number and more small-scale producers are requesting educational support from Extension educators across the state. Given Idaho's vast geography and rural landscapes, attending in-person workshops can be expensive in both time and money for small producers who need to travel long distances to participate in University of Idaho Extension educational programs. At the same time, with improvements in home-based internet access, small producers' interest in web-based learning is increasing.

Our Response

In February 2018, the University of Idaho Extension's small farms and community food systems team initiated its first series of small farm webinars. Funded by a USDA Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program grant, the 2018 webinars series was designed to address the needs of beginning farmers (those with less than 10 years' experience) statewide. Topics covered included: access to land and capital, introduction of Idaho Farm Link, marketing trends, direct marketing, selling to restaurants and grocery stores, cover cropping and USDA funding for on-farm research. Webinars were offered on Monday and Tuesday



Selling to Retail Grocers and Restaurants in Idaho

Your Small Farm
2018 Webinar Series

March 12, 2018



Cultivating Success™ webinars are offered live and recorded for online viewing from the Idaho's Cultivating Success™ website.

evenings to facilitate participation by producers with daytime off-farm employment.

Webinars were recorded and posted on Idaho's Cultivating Success™ website within 48 hours of the live broadcast allowing producers and educators to access recorded webinars and associated handouts, 24/7 at no cost.

Program Outcomes

Idaho's Cultivating Success small farm webinar series proved to be an effective way to provide small farm education to producers across Idaho reaching a total of 172 small farmers and technical assistance providers. Approximately two-thirds of the webinar participants, 115 people, attended the live webinars and another

57 people watched the recorded webinars. A post-webinar evaluation was completed by 72 percent of live webinar participants.

Participants in the three marketing webinars indicated they increased their understanding of 18 marketing topics and they planned to take 61 actions as a result of participating in the webinars. Sample actions include: starting or improving online/website sales; testing a new product or service; using data trends to influence marketing decisions; developing a plan for optimizing market strategies; and conducting market research.

Farmers and land owners who participated in the access to land and capital webinars increased their understanding of 10 key topics and planned to take 30 actions after watching the webinars. Actions included developing a plan to obtain land to farm, listing on the new Idaho Farm Link platform (available from www.cultivatingsuccess.org) and contacting local agencies or farm credit services for loan information.

Cover crop webinar participants increased their knowledge of cover crop benefits, selection and costs, how to test cover crop mixes and the importance of soil testing for cover crop selection. After watching the webinar, 18 participants indicated they are very likely to incorporate cover crops into their farming system.

When asked “What did you learn today that will help you be successful?” webinar participants identified 64 unique learnings. These included very specific information such as “how to find and navigate federal loan programs” and “information about detailed questions to consider for land leasing.”

Other participants indicated they learned how to get started on a specific project or task important to their farm. One participant who attended the Funding for Farmers webinar learned how to apply for a USDA Western Sustainable Agriculture Research and

Education on-farm research grant stating “...I had no idea where to start. I knew I needed help, but was unsure how to get started. This provided me a beginning step.”

Another webinar participant indicated learning important information about how to enter into intermediated retail grocery and restaurant markets saying “I need to use this year to do market research and make contact so I have customers ready for next year and so I know what to grow.”

The Future

The Cultivating Success small farm webinars will continue to be offered in 2019. Future webinar topics will include an in-depth look at key business planning, marketing and production topics requested by 2018 webinar participants. Upcoming and recorded webinars can be found on Idaho’s Cultivating Success™ website at www.cultivatingsuccess.org.

Cooperators and Co-Sponsors

Idaho’s Cultivating Success™ webinar series is co-sponsored by University of Idaho Extension and Rural Roots, Inc., a Moscow-based small acreage farming nonprofit organization. The 2018 webinar series was coordinated by University of Idaho Extension educator Colette DePhelps. Webinar presenters included: University of Idaho Extension educators Colette DePhelps, Lauren Golden, Ariel Agenbroad, Kate Painter and Jennifer Werlin; Cultivating Success™ farmer mentors Diane Green, Melissa Lines and Jessica McAleese; and Rural Roots executive director, Marci Miller. Technical assistance was provided by Idaho’s Cultivating Success coordinator, Amanda Snyder, and University of Idaho Extension educator Jennifer Jensen.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Colette DePhelps, Community Food Systems Area Educator • University of Idaho Extension, Northern District • 208-885-4003
• cdephelps@uidaho.edu

Amanda Snyder, Cultivating Success™ Program Coordinator • University of Idaho Extension, Northern District • 208-885-0984
• amsnyder@uidaho.edu

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