

We Found a Program. Now What?

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IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY
Extension and Outreach

Women in Ag

Organization of Presentation

- Overview of Program Catalog
- Why Evaluate
- Methodology of the Meta-Analysis
- Results and Findings
- Common Themes
- Gaps in Evaluation
- Recommendations

Program Catalog Focus Areas

- Mechanization, safety, and ergonomics
- Farm scale and profitability (business)
- Leadership and management
- Land transfer, access, and stewardship
- Other topics: food systems, planning, and legal issues

Farm Program Catalog

- 45 programs collected by BFRPD leadership team
- Primarily focusing on beginning farmer education
- Organized by area of focus for program curricula
- Brief description included for each
- Target audience, goals & objectives, website and location

Why Evaluation

- BFRWPD team wanted to discover effective programs
 - Evaluation one way to demonstrate and share impact
 - Reporting results, journal articles, promotional, publications
- For Educators:
 - To show impact
 - Public and private value
 - Measurable outcomes
 - Make improvements
 - Needs assessment
 - Show gaps

Selected Programs

- Program catalog narrowed down to 20 programs for evaluation team
- Programs were contacted via email or phone to request for information
 - Reports, journals, promotional material, raw data
- Selection based on:
 - covering a variety of each focus area
 - Availability of evaluation data, tools, and/or results

Methodology

- Assess existing curricula and identify gaps in training as well as best practices based on current
- Data analysis from reports obtained from programs
- Raw data was analyzed to determine impact

General Findings: Program Themes

Networking

- Women's centered environment to facilitate learning
- Leadership opportunities
- Connection with local professionals and organizations
- Financial planning
 - Understanding of finances, reduce expenses, and increase confidence
- Business management

General Findings: Evaluation Tools

- Focus groups: used to facilitate ideas, garner qualitative data
- Follow-up survey (sometime after event): single day or weekend events
- Pre and/or Post surveys: used for longer courses (weeks or months)

From Participants

- Overall, evaluation data shows positive impact
- Pre/Post surveys show most changes over time in knowledge gains of topic areas
- Focus group show what women want out of programming
- Follow-up surveys show how programs can be improved

Pre & Post Financial Knowledge Gains

Holistic Management International

- 80% reported enhanced understanding of farm finances
- 79% reported new or improved records
- 42% reduced farm expenses

Annie's Project

- Knowledge changes in finance management increase from “I know some” to “I know a lot” (1.8-2.73)

Focus Group Networking

- Midwest Organic and Sustainable Education Services
 - Several stated to use contacts or networks forged
- Women, Land, and Legacy
 - 33% reported developing social relationships

Follow up Business Management Skills

- Nebraska Women's Conference
 - 38% of participants changing management practices
 - More than half included marketing and budgeting skills
 - Almost half want more information on farm/ranch business operations
 - Women over 60 more likely to rank higher in importance

Gaps in Evaluation

- Difficulty in gaining evaluation data highlighted most significant gaps
 - Data not collected or shared
- Often times, data was collected but unsure how (or why) to analyze or use effectively

Recommendations

- Tools to use
- Data analysis
- Sharing results
 - Websites, publications/promotions, professional associations, conferences
 - Other educations can benefit!
- Thursday: “You did a program, so what?”