



Southern University  
*and*  
A&M College System

Agricultural Research and Extension Center

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May 31, 2002

Dr. George Cooper  
Deputy Administrator  
Partnerships  
CSREES/USDA  
Washington, D.C. 20250

Dear Dr. Cooper:

The Southern University Cooperative Extension Program submits the Annual Report of accomplishments and results for FY 2001 as required by the Guidelines for State Plans of Work for Agricultural Research and Extension Formula Funds.

Your review and comments of the report are welcomed.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Leodrey Williams".

Leodrey Williams  
Administrator

LW:jjg

Attachment

**USDA -CSREES Annual Report  
FY October 1, 2000 - September 31, 2001**

**Overview**

The Southern University Cooperative Extension Program's (SUCEP) goal is that diverse audiences, those who have limited social and economic resources, improve their access to positive opportunities through outreach education. The objective is to help small-scale farmers and ranchers develop and/or maintain viable farming operations that are in harmony with the environment, help communities build capacity to enhance the growth and development of business and industrial sectors, and improve the quality of life of families and youth throughout the state. SUCEP accomplishes its goals by conducting outreach and educational programs that positively impact the targeted clientele.

**Noted accomplishments for SUCEP include:**

- Through a collaborative effort with Heifer Project International, seven small livestock associations were enhanced by adopting management skills to better serve their membership.
- The Families First-Nutrition Education and Wellness System (FF-NEWS) Program reached over 34,304 limited-resource individuals through direct and indirect contacts.
- The Mini-Society Entrepreneurship Camp provided an opportunity for ninety youth to gain knowledge on the operations of the market forces in a capitalistic society. These youth set up four mini capitalistic societies for a eight-hour period where they participated in the buying and selling of goods and services within and among societies.
- The outreach efforts for the Faith-Based Initiative benefitted more than 2,500 individuals and families. This is estimated to be 15% of the faith-based leadership in the state of Louisiana.
- Approximately 7,300 contacts were made with youth participating in the Youth Educational Support After School Program (YES) that provided hands-on activities in science, math, reading and character education.
- The Sustainable Agriculture Program successfully reached more than 1,800 producers, gardeners, landowners. There has been numerous success but a notable accomplishment allowed 10 producers to start and/or improve their pastured-poultry operation. Four of these producers also established a direct market for their birds, thus selling them at \$10.00 each, well above market price.

## **Goal 1**

### **Overview**

SUCEP's agriculture program targets small, socially disadvantaged and minority farmers. This is a diverse group of farmers who produce an array of agricultural enterprises to include traditional agronomic crops, vegetables and livestock. SUCEP's goal is to help these farmers develop and maintain viable farming operations.

During the past decade, Louisiana Summary of Agriculture and Natural Resources reported that there were 450 small commercial vegetable farms with an average of six acres per farm in the seven parishes where the 1890 agriculture program operates. These farms average \$6,000, annually from vegetable production. The number of commercial vegetable growers has increased slightly and is expected to continue to increase. This increase is due, in part, to depressed market conditions for agronomic crops and increased demand for fresh vegetables. Major problems preventing vegetable producers from achieving their desired outcomes are: lack of understanding regarding the market structure and how to access available markets, risk management, and following recommended production and cultural practices.

SUCEP is working with low-income families in 18 parishes on home/container gardening and beautification of home environment. Gardens range from one to two pot plants in urban areas to an acre in rural areas. As interest in gardening increases, residents are seeking information on marketing strategies and policies, economic and financial planning, and management.

In addition to the above areas of work, SUCEP has established an educational program targeting sheep, goat and rabbit producers. These producers are experiencing similar production, management and marketing problems encountered by the gardening and vegetable producers.

### **Key Theme - Small Farm Viability**

- b. Much of SUCEP's efforts were devoted to small farm viability. The program is operational in seven parishes in the state. Producers were taught holistic and sustainable farm planning principles and concepts. Producers also received information and technical assistance in the area of agricultural risk management. The above information was combined with the framework of helping farmers follow recommended production and cultural practices. The goal was to help producers increase their share of the dollars received from farm commodities. SUCEP used a variety of educational methods such as farm visits, meetings, workshops, result and method demonstrations, and farm tours.
  
- c. Impact - Based on university faculty and field agents' reports, SUCEP had more than 18,000 contacts with farmers, gardeners, and homeowners. SUCEP conducted over 3,000 one-on-one farm visits, 35 workshops, 25 result demonstrations as well as numerous method demonstrations, circular letters, newspaper articles, radio and television contacts. Overall

evaluation of the quality and value of production meetings and demonstrations by participants was 3.5 on a 5-point scale. Post observations and discussions by field faculty with participants indicate that producers are slowly incorporating the risk management strategies into their farming operations. More farmers, especially vegetable and small livestock producers are finding alternative marketing outlets for the commodities.

- c. Source of Federal Funds- Smith - Lever Act under Section 1444
- d. Scope of Impact - The total cost for the program including salaries, fringe benefits, travel, and administration was approximately \$105,000.

### **Key Theme - Adding Value to New and Old Agricultural Products**

- d. SUCEP's goal was first to help producers become effective managers of the enterprises they currently produce. A second goal was to help find new enterprises to give these producers a comparative advantage either due to scale of production and/or marketing strategies. Target enterprises included meat goats, pastured-poultry, and vegetables. Producers were helped with developing associations, farmers' markets, and on-farm markets. SUCEP also helped small farmers develop marketing strategies for valued-added products such as jellies, packaged vegetables, customers slaughtering, etc.
- e. Impact - More than 250 vegetable producers increased their awareness and adopted one or more valued-added approaches or practices such as developing direct, regional, and terminal marketing channels. SUCEP was successful in helping small vegetable farmers expand the volume of produce handled by increasing the number of participating farmers and the amount of vegetables each farmer supplied to the local farmers' markets. The markets increased the number of producers participating and days in which the markets were open. Through a collaborative effort with Heifer Project International, seven small livestock associations were enhanced by adopting management skills to better serve their membership. SUCEP serves as the lead entity providing educational and technical assistance for the Louisiana Meat Goat Association. The 100 members of the association were provided with training on best production practices. Approximately 35 goat producers received direct on-the-farm assistance with production practices. The goat industry continues to fluctuate as producers enter and exit the industry. The SUCEP goat specialist continued to write a news article for the association's bi-monthly newsletter.
- c. Source of Federal Funds- Smith - Lever Act under Section 1444
- d. Scope of Impact - SUCEP, in collaboration with the Southern University Agricultural Research Program, Louisiana Department of Agriculture, Louisiana State University Agricultural Center, and local grassroots farmer organizations, delivered the educational programs to help the small-scale farmers of Louisiana. The total cost for the program including salaries, fringe benefits, travel, and administration was approximately \$105,000.

## Goal 2

### Overview

As the economy began to have a downward spiral in economic growth, there was an increase in the number of families living in food insecure households. In 2000, 11 million or 10.5% of all U.S. households were food insecure equaling to more than 33 million people. Of these 33 million people, 13 million were children under the age of 18 and at least 3 million of these children lived in a household that experienced hunger. Food insecurity is defined as whenever the availability of nutritionally adequate and safe food or the ability to acquire acceptable foods in socially acceptable ways, is limited or uncertain. According to Second Harvest Food Bank, 23.3 million Americans were served by their network of service providers- an increase of 9% over the number that was served and noted in 1997. Despite full-time jobs, families are still struggling to feed their children, while senior citizens must make choices between prescription medication for improving quality of life and food. Louisiana is ranked fourth in the nation for food insecure households (12.8% of the population are food insecure) and has a poverty rate of 19.2 % (823,000 people).

### Key Theme: Food Accessibility and Affordability

- a. A major component within the Families First - Nutrition Education and Wellness System (FF-NEWS) program is assisting families with not only stretching their food dollar but in also incorporating low-cost healthy menu selections within their meal plan. Targeting food stamp and food stamp eligible families, information is provided at various communal sites of targeted audiences and methods of utilizing foods that are provided are given. Some of these programs are Food for Families/Seniors Food Distribution and Commodity Food Distribution, and general community group programs in limited-resource areas. Literature is given to targeted FF-NEWS parishes which have full-time Nutrition Program Assistants that provide nutrition information. These parishes include: East Baton Rouge, East Feliciana, Ascension, St. James, East Carroll and West Carroll.
- b. Impact- Nutrition Program Assistants in six parishes reached over 7,340 individuals through recipe/fact sheets. Of those individuals, 60% were food stamp recipients (4,404). Many of the consumers, reached through food distribution sites and group meetings, stated that out of 12 recipes provided throughout the year, they had incorporated at least six of them into their overall menu selections for their family. At least 40% of the recipients commented on the flexibility of the recipes in using items already on hand with very little extra purchasing. From this, requests have been made through group sessions, that a series of lessons be developed that will assist them with more recipes that are healthy and easy to prepare within their busy schedule.

- c. Source of Federal Funds- Smith - Lever Act under Section 1444
- d. Scope of Impact- SUCEP, in collaboration with Food and Nutrition Services, the Louisiana State Food Stamp Office and local parish community and health agencies. The total cost for the program including salaries, fringe benefits, travel and administration was approximately \$105,000.

### **Goal 3**

#### **Overview**

Diabetes, cardiovascular disease, and cancer ranks in the top 10 chronic diseases that plague Americans. In Louisiana, diabetes mortality rates are the highest in the nation and cardiovascular disease and cancer ranks ninth and fourth respectively. Research has proven that there is a direct correlation between chronic disease prevention, dietary intake and behavior. Louisiana risk behavior survey (2000) indicates that less than 30% of all adults eat fewer than five servings of fruits and vegetables a day and 35% of women and 29% of men report no leisure-time physical activity. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the National Center for Health Statistics, reported limited-resource families (income less than \$10,000), have a higher percentage of poor health status. Since 2000, SUCEP and ten other 1890 universities formed a consortium to help limited-resource families improved dietary and health behaviors through intensive nutrition education. Nutrition Program Assistants in six targeted parishes have provided nutrition information to persons receiving or eligible to receive food stamps. FF-NEWS program is a nutrition intervention program designed to help with selection and preparation of meals consistent with cultural traditions while improving overall health. A series of 14 lessons must be completed in order to ensure at least some type of behavior change.

Recent behavior risk survey data indicates that lack of knowledge of chronic disease prevention, lack of adequate healthcare facilities within communities, as well as engaging in risky behavior are the major reasons for limited change in limited-resource families. Many of these risk factors are eating patterns, limited or no doctor visits/health insurance, smoking, and other substance abuse.

Research has shown that sixteen percent of all males between 12 and 17 used smokeless tobacco in 1985, and the number is increasing rapidly. Furthermore, a March 1995 article in *Consumer Reports* stated that the number of young men using snuff actually grew ten times between 1970 and 1990. Statewide, there are numerous programs targeting youth smokers. However, few of these programs specifically target users of snuff or chewing tobacco, and none of them target youths involved in livestock and rodeo programs. Also, few programs target the rural population. We have found that an astonishing number of these young individuals are users of spit tobacco.

**Key Theme: Human Nutrition (FF-NEWS)**

- a. Nutrition Program Assistants in six targeted parishes have provided nutrition information to persons receiving or eligible to receive food stamps. FF-NEWS program is a nutrition intervention program designed to help with selection and preparation of meals consistent with cultural traditions while improving overall health. A series of 14 lessons must be completed in order to ensure at least some type of behavior change.
- b. Impact- A total of 1,196 direct nutrition contacts were provided. Of those 98% were African-American, 96% were female, 58% were receiving WIC, 77% were receiving food stamps, 43% were receiving commodities, and 17% received FITAP. This shows a 100% increase over the number of clients that were reached last year. This may be due to the full time status of the Nutrition Program Assistants versus a part-time status (20 hours per week) last year. A total of 34,304 families were reached through direct and indirect contacts. Direct contacts are considered to be participants actually participating in a nutrition session. Indirect contacts are considered to be participants receiving fact sheets and gleaming information from displays at various locations and the percentage of limited-resource families that received information through printed media. One of the program's participants said, "I did not know what to do with some of my WIC foods so I used to give them away. I have used some of the recipes given to me and now I use most of my foods and I do not have to go to the corner store all the time." One note that a Nutrition Program Assistant wrote as a part of her success story included the following statement, "Participants are becoming at ease discussing their household situations about food. They realize that they should be doing better as far as eating healthy but they also know we are here to help."
- c. Source of Federal Funds- Smith - Lever Act under Section 1444
- d. Scope of Impact- SUCEP, in collaboration with the Food Nutrition Services, Louisiana State Food Stamp Office and local parish community and health agencies. The total cost for the program including salaries, fringe benefits, travel and administration was approximately \$105,000.

**Key Theme: Health**

- a. The *Healthy Prescriptions* newsletter is a joint publication between the area of Health Education and Nutrition and is published bi-monthly. The newsletter focuses on issues relating to diet and health and is disseminated to our parish staff for distribution to local clientele.

In collaboration with the Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals Tobacco Control Program, SUCEP and the Southern University State Horse Show, Livestock Show, and Goat Show launched a preventive anti-tobacco campaign about the health hazards of using tobacco products., especially smokeless tobacco. Exhibitors participated in the above shows and wore ribbons that promoted the SUCEP anti-tobacco campaign. Additional promotional materials were: brochures, displays, posted signs, notepads and pens.

- b. Impact- The first issue was published in January, 2001 with 500 issues. Currently, 1,730 individuals receive a copy of the bimonthly newsletter.

Anti-Tobacco clubs were formed in seven parishes with 220 children currently participating. Each child has a pledge card and have committed to remain tobacco-free.

- c. Source of Federal Funds- Smith - Lever Act under Section 1444

- d. Scope of Impact- SUCEP, in collaboration with the Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals, and local livestock producers(Heifer Project International). The total cost for the program including salaries, fringe benefits, travel and administration was approximately \$105,000.

## **Goal 4**

### **Overview**

The SUCEP sustainable agriculture program is concentrated in seven parishes where there are extension field agents with agricultural responsibilities. Based on a survey conducted by the agents, there were approximately 600 small-scale farmers growing primarily agronomic and vegetable crops, and some livestock. The targeted small farmers tend to have low yields and crops of substandard quality because they are not following the latest recommended production and cultural practices. The sustainable agriculture program is designed to help farmers become better prepared to deal with new environmental and conservation policies and regulations. These programs focus on pesticide usage and land management issues. The program also has an objective to identify those agricultural enterprises that lend themselves to sustainable and organic methods of production, as well as, command premium price at the market. Much of the sustainable agriculture work was performed in partnership with USDA, Natural Resource and Conservation Service and the Southern Sustainable Agricultural Research and Educational Program.

### **Key Theme - Sustainable Agriculture**

- d. The SUCEP agents in collaboration with the Southern University agricultural scientists are developing best management practices that minimize the use of commercial fertilizers and pesticides. The program also focuses on helping farmers who successfully produce enterprises (crops and livestock) using sustainable and organic practices to establish market outlets to include farmers' markets, roadside stands, and on-farm markets.
- e. Impact - More than 30 agricultural educators (extension agents, USDA personnel and farm leaders) gained knowledge on the concepts and principles of sustainable agriculture. The program successfully reached more than 1,800 producers, gardeners, landowners, and others with sustainable agriculture. These education efforts resulted in the following:



- Ten producers started or improved a pastured-poultry operation. Six of these producers also established a direct market for their birds, thus selling them at \$10.00, approximately 300% above market price.
  - Forty-five beef cattle producers adopted soil and pasture management practices.
  - Thirty vegetable producers adopted sustainable marketing practices through participation in their local farmers' markets.
  - One hundred and fifteen producers and homeowners gained knowledge in the safe use of pesticides.
  - Ninety producers attended a production meeting gaining knowledge in environmental law.
- c. Source of Federal Funds- Smith - Lever Act under Section 1444
- d. Scope of Impact - SUCEP, in collaboration with the Southern University Agricultural Research Program, Louisiana Department of Agriculture, ARE and USDA, NRCS., delivered the educational programs to help producers, gardeners and land-owners. The total cost of the program including salaries, fringe benefits travel, and administration is approximately \$105,000.

## **Goal 5**

### **Overview**

Based on the 2000 census, 1,1,219,062 (27.3%) residents in Louisiana were less than 18 years of age. Louisiana ranks in the lower one third percentile of the 50 states for quality of life for its youth. The state also leads the nation in the number of youth living in poverty, living in single parent families, living with health problems, and living with parents without a high school education. These factors place slightly more than 60% of Louisiana's youth at risk. Youth development research indicates the need for character and quality education, parental involvement, and civic and citizenship education to help ensure the long-term positive development of youth. Through SUCEP's educational program, strategies have been developed to help and support academic learning by all members of the family.

The citizens of Louisiana continue to suffer economically and socially because of earlier dependency on depressed petroleum and agricultural industries. Louisiana is ranked among the top ten states for poverty and low literacy. These factors tend to yield a less educated population that are not prepared for the opportunities of mainstream America. The economic and community development program works with faith-based and other social and civil organizations to explore and develop enterprises that will foster long term economic viability.

### **Key Theme - Youth Development (Youth Educational Support After School Program)**

- a. Youth Educational Support After School Program (YES) is an organized after-school program that incorporates education and fun in scholastic activities, expands the role of the parent/guardian with academic learning and builds support, self-esteem and confidence through

completion of tasks and projects. YES is operational in nine parishes during the academic school year. During FY 2001, YES focused on: youth, parents, volunteers, school staff and community members at-large, working together on a community-based project that required total involvement. Seven YES community-based projects were implemented inclusive of gardening, beautification, mural painting, and community clean up. A total of 250 youth and adults participated in these projects.

- b. Impact: The evaluations reflect that the majority of participants gain a greater appreciation of team work and community volunteerism. The potential long-term impact is a sense of community service and pride. The on-going efforts of the YES Program allowed agents and volunteers to make approximately 7,300 contacts by providing hands-on activities in science, math, reading and character education.
- c. Source of Federal Funds - Smith - Lever Act under Section 1444
- d. Scope of Impact - The total cost for the program including salaries, fringe benefits, travel, and administration is approximately \$105,000.

**KEY Theme: Youth Development (Mini-Society Entrepreneurship Camp)**

- D. Mini-Society, an entrepreneurship education curriculum for children ages 8 to 12 was presented in a one-week residential camp on the campus of Southern University and A&M College. The program is designed to provide children with opportunities to experience entrepreneurship; teach entrepreneurship concepts in the context of these experiences, and integrate the study of entrepreneurship with other subjects such as language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, critical thinking, problem solving, practical arts and cooperative learning. The six trained educators for the camp consisted of the Cooperative Extension staff (state and field) from Southern and LSU and the Boys and Girls Club of Greater Baton Rouge. One hundred youth were selected to participate in the one-week residential camp.
- b. Impact: Six staffs were trained by the Kaufman Foundation to teach the program. Ninety youth, seven volunteers and extension agents participated in the camp. The youth set up four capitalistic societies that provided opportunities to earn and spend money along with establishing businesses to provide goods and services to the citizens. All of the participants had a chance to experience entrepreneurship first-hand and the trainers interacted with the youth through debriefing sessions about their experiences.
- c. Source of Federal Funds- Smith - Lever Act under Section 1444
- d. Scope of Impact - The total cost for the program including salaries, fringe benefits, travel, and administration is approximately \$100,000.

**Key Theme - Youth Development (Livestock and Poultry Show)**

- a. SUCEP Livestock and Poultry Show is a comprehensive program to help youth develop leadership and character skills. The Youth Rabbit Show also provides an opportunity for youth to enhance those skills. In preparation for both shows, youth work with the livestock (beef breeding, dairy, sheep, swine) and rabbits concerning proper nutrition and grooming. During the shows, youth are required to exhibit their animals and are judged on industry standards in the areas of showmanship, control and appearance of the animal. The animal is judged for quality and overall appearance according to industry standards. Youth are also provided with the opportunity to sell their animal at an open auction; thus, learning economic and financial management practices. Corporate sponsors of the show are: Heifer Project International, Louisiana Farm Bureau Federation, Louisiana Federal Land Bank Association, Louisiana Feed and Supply Company and Lone Star Feeds.
- b. Impact - More than 250 youth participated in the SUCEP Livestock and Poultry Show. Approximately 75% of youth exhibited leadership skills relative to showmanship of their animal. Six hundred youth exhibited at the Southern University State and National Rabbit Show. During FY 2001, two seminars were held to assist producers with production and management and marketing practices.
- c. Source of Federal Funds- Smith - Lever Act under Section 1444
- d. Scope of Impact - The total cost for the program including salaries, fringe benefits, travel, and administration is approximately \$79,324.00.

**Key Theme – Community Development, Organizational Development and Faith-Based Development**

- d. SUCEP assisted nonprofit organizations, faith-based leaders and organizations by developing a statewide faith-based community economic development initiative that focused on economic development, housing development, health care, strategic planning, evaluation and charitable choice. The Faith-Based community economic development initiative consists of two program components, which include training and development. The annual conference is a three day event with more than 21 sessions and tours and workshops, noted speakers, and public and private providers who assist the faith-based community. The second program component is resource development where the SUCEP specialists and agents assist the faith-based community with organizational development, strategic planning, and project selections. SUCEP has formed strategic alliances with various service providers such as the U.S. Department of Agriculture, U.S. Department of Housing and Development, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, The Louisiana Department of Economic Development, The Louisiana Department of Health and Hospital, the FDIC, the Comptroller of the Currency, various banks and national nonprofit organizations.
- b. Impact- More than 3,500 people have benefitted from these meetings, which is about 17% of

the faith-based community who participated in the project supports community economic development and have a strong desire to collaborate with service providers. Approximately 70% of those surveyed after the meetings indicated they had implemented changes or were planning changes in their operations as a result of the outreach efforts and individual contacts. Many of the faith-based organizations across the State are involved in the national faith-based initiative supported by the White House and the Federal Agencies. As a result of our efforts in working with the State Agencies, we were successful in assisting faith-based organizations in the State of Louisiana to become eligible for over 5 million dollars available through charitable choice and TANF (technical assistance for needy families).

- c. Source of Federal Funds- Smith - Lever Act under Section 1444
- d. Scope of Impact - The total cost for the program including salaries, fringe benefits, travel, and administration is approximately \$100,000.

## **STAKEHOLDER INPUT**

The Southern University Cooperative Extension Program (SUCEP) has always had input from targeted stakeholders. The input has helped SUCEP design educational programs that address needs of the clientele; thus, specific programming efforts will assist the clientele relative to enhancing their quality of life. SUCEP works with parish advisory committees, livestock producers, faith-based organizations, economic and community development organizations, nutrition and health associations, and other entities to secure information to modify and/or develop educational programs.

The LSU Cooperative Extension Service initiated and conducted a strategic planning process in each parish of Louisiana during the 1999-2001 fiscal year. The 1890 county staff and stakeholders participated in the process. Forums were conducted in each parish, and those parishes with 1890 extension staff not only invited participants, but also attended as well as served as facilitators for some parishes. The representation was broad-based, inclusive of gender, race, and ethnicity. Issues and concerns relative to the 1890 program were identified. Those concerns included economic development, education, environment, youth development, family support and structure, crime and other social issues. From this process, SUCEP has begun to amend its educational programs to ensure relevancy and timeliness.

## **PROGRAM REVIEW PROCESS**

### **Evaluation of multi-state activities**

There are no multi-institutional or multi-state programs supported by federal funds, Section

1444 at this time.

### **Merit Review Process**

A basic assessment of programs is conducted by the field staff and university specialists to determine the usefulness of the information. A merit review process committee is in the process of being appointed.