

Breaking Agriculture Barriers for New and Beginning Farmers through the 2014 Risk Management and Business Development Training Workshop

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The Small Farms Research Center (AAMU) in collaboration with the Alabama Cooperative Extension System hosted its Agricultural Risk Management and Business Development Training Workshop on August 20-22, 2014 in Mobile, Al. This event featured a farm field day at Humming Star Alpacas Farm in Silverhill, Al (Wednesday, August 20th) followed by training sessions at the Jon Archer Agricultural Center (August 21st and 22nd) focusing on risk management, business development and new and beginning farmer issues. The farm field day was very informative and educational that showcased many interesting facts on “What are alpacas” their behavior and how it is all based on safety, the daily, monthly and annual care of alpacas in regards to feed, hay and water, inoculations, shelter and pasture requirements, information about alpaca fiber quality, how the fiber is harvested and processed including a demonstration of carding and spinning fleece.

The training sessions at the Jon Archer Agricultural Center (August 21st and 22nd) was delivered through hands-on demonstrations, lectures and in depth discussions by agriculture professionals in their field of expertise. The topics consisted of the following: *Seasonal High Tunnel Management, NRCS & FSA Cost Share Program for New and Beginning Farmers and Ranchers, FSA Overview, Sustainable Agriculture Demonstration Garden, Grants and Funding Opportunities for Producers and Landowners (Part I & Part II), Sustainable Agriculture, Enhancing the Safety of Locally-Grown Produce, Gulf Coast Resource Conservation and Development Council and Marketing Value-Added Agriculture Products.* The producers and landowners were very engaged and receive a wealth of information from the speakers. The highlight topics from the surveys were Marketing Value-Added Agriculture Products and Grants and Funding Opportunities for Producers and Landowners (Part I & II). From the survey responses, many producers seek to know grants available that fits their farm operations and ways to marketing their agriculture product. We are pleased to know that the majority of our farmers, producers and landowners left with a plethora of information to go better sustain and build their various farm operations. During the Grants and Funding Opportunities in depth discussion, the producers received the booklet that shows step-by-step layout to assist in grant writing and funding opportunities available for small scale farmers and producers. See the following pictures from the 2014 Risk Management and Business Development Training Workshop.

Statistics from this event shows most of the producers, gardeners and landowners gained the most knowledge from the following areas: Marketing Value-Added Agriculture Products (77%), Grants and Funding Opportunities for Producers and Landowners (76%) and Sustainable Agriculture (75%).



Alpacas are beautiful animals.



This is a demonstration of picking fleece done at Humming Star Alpacas.



The two-day session at the Jon Archer Agricultural Center featured a group photo of maybe 60 or more producers, landowners and farmers from surrounding counties in Alabama and Georgia.



Marsha Stolz, Master Gardener gave a demonstration tour of the on-site garden to the producers and did a Q and A for the vegetable growers there.