

## History of Small Farms Research Center

The Small Farms Research Center at Alabama A&M University (AAMU) was first conceived in 2000 with funding from USDA's Office of Outreach authorized under Section 2501 of the 1990 Farm Bill. The Center is devoted to issues affecting the family farm, and assessing how such issues impact profitability and overall sustainability of small farm operations. AAMU's 2501 project (a.k.a. Small Farmers Outreach Training and Technical Assistance Project) received its initial funding in 1994. As project staff and faculty grew in numbers and became diverse and activities more complex and holistic in nature, the need for a Center to conduct sound and targeted research, provide quality education and effectively deliver outreach training to underserved agricultural producers became increasingly inevitable. Thus, the Small Farms Research Center was initiated in 2000 to conduct research and provide services throughout Alabama, with special and particular outreach emphasis on 21 underserved counties in north Alabama.

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## Agricultural Outreach and Assistance Program for Veterans and Socially Disadvantaged Farmers and Landowners



This project was funded by the USDA  
Office of Advocacy and Outreach  
(2015 Education Project)

## Introduction

Farmers, veterans, socially disadvantaged, beginning farmers and ranchers (SD-V-BFRs), do not have access to information and the knowledge to use to advance their farm operations. The problem is that most SD-V-BFRs, often struggle to find and use appropriate information. The majority experiences frustration of not being able to locate answers to specific questions, not understanding the information presented, and being overloaded with too much information that they cannot filter through it to find what they need.



The goal of the project is to educate and empower SD-V-BFRs to access capital, markets, utilize USDA programs, services and other resources to increase producer's program participation and enhance profitability and sustainability for farmers.

The Small Farms Research Center (AAMU) program titled "Enhancing and Sustaining Opportunities for Veterans and Socially Disadvantaged Farmers and Ranchers in Alabama" will provide training and technical assistance to Alabama's veterans and socially disadvantaged beginning farmers and ranchers. Our returning servicemen and women in Alabama have often expressed interest in farming opportunities, this project would be great for enhancing the skills and knowledge to further their farm operation and agribusiness.

## Objectives

- Recruit veterans in farming opportunities
- Assist producers in owning and operating successful farm businesses
- Provide holistic approach in educating producers in farming.
- Build a network system

## Target Audience

The project targets 38 counties including 23 strike-force communities. Other entities included but not limited to SDFR, undeserved communities, non-profit organizations, agribusiness and all interested parties.



## Approach and Methods.

The Center will deliver outreach programs, technical assistance, host workshop, seminars and one-on-one consultations.



## Potential Impact

- Increased participation in USDA loan and cost shared markets.
- Improved market access, more farmers/ranchers using farmers markets
- Farmers being more trusting and less skeptical of USDA
- Increased financial and computer literacy among participating farmers and ranchers
- Improved quality of life for many SD-V-BFRs
- Increased literacy and education on a number of programs and services

To learn more about the Small Farms Research Center project titled "Enhancing and Sustaining Farming Opportunities For Veterans and Socially Disadvantaged Farmers and Ranchers" in Alabama, please contact us at (256)-372-4970 or 1-866-858-4970