

Land Grant Youth Entrepreneurship Symposium

Youth Market: Rural Entrepreneurship Experience

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Topic:

Experiential learning entrepreneurship program incorporates a youth component into the county effort to improve the economic status of families in a rural Appalachian area. The success of the youth market project demonstrates that young people can benefit as participants in alternative agriculture ventures. They can become contributing members of their households as they develop life skills, gain money management experience, and explore new product markets.

Target Audience: Youth ages 10-16 and their families with interest in participation in a local community market

Program/Curriculum objectives: Youth market goals are focused in two areas:

1. Conference experience – youth gain knowledge and skills through participation in a youth tract at the annual rural development conference
2. Vendor experience - youth develop a successful small business idea

The conference youth tract is an all-day event that offers young people an opportunity to develop a product, conduct market research, set prices, market their product, calculate profit and loss, and make marketing adjustments. The fact that the conference is held annually allows for returning youth to develop new products and gain vendor experience in successive years.

Skills gained from participation in the conference are put to use in a real-life vendor experience. The young vendors are offered a guided small business start-up, first at a youth-only market and later as a youth vendor at the regular farmers market.

Results: Four annual economic development conferences attracted more than 400 participants. The youth tract was attended by 59 youth. Participants demonstrated increased knowledge about conducting market research, marketing concepts, conditions for adjusting prices, and calculating profit or loss. Returning youth participants developed their own products based on earlier years experience, assisted with teaching the less experienced youth, and reported an increase in profits.

Twenty-one youth participated as vendors at farmers markets. They sold a variety of items including honey, eggs, vegetables, plants, jewelry, candy, baked goods, crafts, and art. Youth vendors recorded an average profit on their 4-H project records in the first year of \$112 per participant. In year four, youth vendors increased their profits with several recording up to \$925

profit during the summer season. Severn youth participants reported continued success as vendors in a community market setting.

In addition to the evaluation of profits, written evaluation of the program was completed by gathering information from participants about their knowledge gained in areas such as market research techniques, making change, and calculating profit and loss. Participants were asked about their overall satisfaction with their experience and if they had interest in continuation with sales at a youth market. In addition, observations of youth behavior was recorded, such as, demonstrations of youth adjusting prices based upon market situations, adapting marketing strategies during the course of the day, and improving their product offerings in subsequent years.

Partners supporting the youth market project include:

- Mt Fresh Producers Association – local farmers market

- Garrett County Economic Development – county government

- Rural Development Corporation – two-county board appointed by county commissioners with the goal of increasing agricultural economic development

- Garrett College – community college

- Sponsors/donors, local businesses and organizations – including Farm Bureau, banks, Farm Credit, local farms

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Logic Model of Youth Market – Ann Sherrard, 2004

Situation: It becomes increasingly difficult for small farm families to derive adequate income to maintain their quality of life. As a result, the Rural Development Corporation was formed with representatives from Garrett and Preston Counties. The goal of the RDC is to improve economic opportunities for individuals in both counties. This includes alternative agriculture opportunities, agri-tourism, and profit centers. Young people can benefit as participants in the alternative agriculture ventures. They can become contributing members of their households, develop life skills, gain money management experience, and explore new product markets. A youth market provides young people an opportunity for experiential learning as vendors.

Inputs	Outputs Activities Participation		Outcomes – Impact Short Term Long Term Medium Term		
<p>What we invest:</p> <p>4-H Educator time</p> <p>Mini Society curriculum</p> <p>Youth / Parents</p> <p>Mt Fresh mentors</p> <p>Volunteer leaders</p> <p>Materials</p> <p>Travel</p> <p>Alternative Agriculture Conference</p>	<p>What we do:</p> <p>Recruit youth</p> <p>Conduct training sessions at Alternative Ag Conference</p> <p>Establish partnership with Mt Fresh marketers</p> <p>Develop publicity campaign</p> <p>Coordinate 8 youth markets</p> <p>Conduct record-</p>	<p>Who we reach:</p> <p>Young people between the ages of 8-18</p> <p>Families of youth</p> <p>Mt Fresh producers/mentors</p> <p>Consumers</p>	<p>What the short term results are:</p> <p>Youth participants at the Alternative Ag Conference will demonstrate knowledge of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - market surveys - product development - pricing - advertising <p>12 Youth market vendors will record information learned during their market experience, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - price adjustments - display techniques 	<p>What the medium term results are:</p> <p>15 youth will identify products and participate as vendors</p> <p>Youth will demonstrate market adaptation during the season</p> <p>Youth will complete project records and identify their profit or loss</p>	<p>That the ultimate results are:</p> <p>80% of youth vendors will report a profit from their small businesses (1-5 years)</p> <p>50% of youth vendors will transition to membership in the adult Mt Fresh market (3-10 years)</p> <p>Youth market</p>

Chamber of Commerce support	keeping workshop		- record keeping skills - money management	75% of youth will return as vendors in subsequent years	participants will achieve employment upon graduation from 4-H (5-10 years) Net income reported by farm families will show an increased value (5-10 years)
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