Making a Difference

Grand Challenge:  Community Vitality

Title:  Promoting the Possibilities of an Agriculture-Based Business

Why is this issue important?
Agri-tourism is growing across the country providing business opportunities with agricultural roots. You’ve seen them in your communities: U-pick berry farms, pumpkin patches, vineyards and wineries, meat goats, alpacas, barns with stall rentals and barns marketed as wedding venues. The possibilities are limitless!

How did Extension address this issue?
K-State Research and Extension — Shawnee County offered the workshop From Llamas to Lodging: The Possibilities of an Ag-Based Business. The workshop targeted growers, hobby farmers, unique markets, destination venues with an agriculture focus and large farmers seeking to add extra income to their operation. The program included information and resources to create a business plan, utilize marketing resources, access business loans and hear the stories and lessons learned of several local business champions.

What was the impact?
37 participants attended, and 27 returned program evaluations. Of those:

- Seven participants indicated they planned to start an ag-based business in the next 6 – 12 months.
- Seven indicated they currently have an ag-based business they wish to grow.
- Fourteen indicated they have determined the “next step” for starting or growing their business, which included: Get a special use permit; Create a business plan; Start egg sales, and Research zoning in my area.

As a result of the workshop:

- 22 agreed or strongly agreed they improved their knowledge of next steps to starting an ag-related business;
- 23 agreed or strongly agreed they learned new resources to help them start an ag-related business;
- 20 agreed or strongly agreed they were more likely to start or grow a new ag business;
- 24 agreed or strongly agreed they increased their support network of community resources or mentors.

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