



Cooperative Extension Programs

SCHOOL MARKETING: A Regional Marketing Model

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FAMU Cooperative Extension Programs, in collaboration with the New North Florida Cooperative, has developed an effective model that addresses the specific needs and capabilities of small-scale farmers to cultivate schools as markets for agricultural products.

The model provides:

- ▶ Opportunities for procurement of local or regional agricultural produce by school nutrition programs
- ▶ Provides an alternative market opportunity for small-scale farmers



It is intended that such efforts will:

- ▶ Facilitate incorporation of local and/or regional produce by school nutrition programs
- ▶ Increase participation of small-scale farmers in alternative markets through coordinated production and distribution systems.



PILOT PROJECT 2003 – 2006

- Facilitated farmer participation in existing school marketing efforts
- Evaluated the feasibility for small-scale farmers to sell select value-added products

Participating school districts:

- FLORIDA – 7
- GEORGIA – 20
- ALABAMA – 22
- MISSISSIPPI – 3



- ▶ Project activities also involved training and assistance for state and local food service personnel in procurement of fresh produce from the network.
- ▶ Three enterprises were selected for the pilot (collards, green beans and sweet potatoes).
- ▶ Several demonstration projects involved training and assistance in crop production, mechanical harvesting, and value-added processing & distribution.



Accomplishments 2003-06

- ▶ Over 50 school districts recruited for participation; incorporated fresh products from local farmers into school meal programs
- ▶ Small-scale farmers sold over 4,500 dozens of collards, 1,500 bushels of green beans, 350 bushels of sweet potatoes
- ▶ State and local school food service personnel trained in procurement of fresh produce from local farmers
- ▶ Small-scale farmers trained in distribution to school markets in FL, GA, AL and MS.



- ▶ Small-scale farmers developed appropriate planting, spraying, irrigation management system for collards to maximize production yields
- ▶ Small-scale farmers trained in use of mechanical harvesting for peas and beans (thus reducing production costs)
- ▶ Small-scale farmers established market with over 20 grocery stores; networking across state lines to provide products for these outlets
- ▶ Small-scale farmers trained in distribution and market development; establishing markets with military commissaries



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