

Impact Evaluation – Measuring the Change Your Work Creates

Notes from the presentation by Anu Rangarajan from Cornell Small Farms Program at the 10/10 BF Learning Network Meeting in Albany, NY

Review of what outcome USDA wants:

- 6000 new BF
- Activity Measures (see hand out#1)

***Anu is using material from Nancy Ellen-Kiernen @ Penn State- evaluation queen working with farmers

Verification-(see Anu slides)

- Quantitative and qualitative (who cares that 10 people came, but then what)
- “end in mind” work backwards with end goal

Performance Target

- helpful in project design (see slide)”what else can these milestones do?
- Who...see slide
- Example-Hand out from Anu- Cover crops #3
- Measuring less quantifiable—social change example...find indicators, explain that you cannot quantify in 3 years of research , maybe 10, so what would you measure in the long term and what are the shorter term indicators of progress?

Verification Evaluation/ strategy-

Anu Comments (left column)

Participant comments (right column)

If you collaborate, make sure everyone gets \$ with key responsibilities	3k per farm is the breakdown of 6000 farms per USDA and \$18m
<p>How do we measure as we go...can only focus in on actions...hand out #4</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge change- before/after questions- give evidence of impact- pre/post at end of treatment most powerful after – so they know what they know and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning outcomes assessment, before and after- you can measure at the beginning what do you want to learn. Anu response- better afterward, because farmers do not want to admit what they don't know...also don't want to

<p>don't know after learning...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Farmers want word scales not number scales...write fewer better questions • Attitude • Skills • Intentions- pick the key ones • Previous behavior and intentions • ***focus in on change, not all the other stuff...was the food good, speakers good...still need open ended questions at end that don't fully measure, but allows a chance to vent 	<p>over-survey them</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make questions specific to key learning outcomes of your program
<p>Nancy's slide- her contact...</p>	
<p>These are just question models, keep it precise and limited to key questions, only a few...</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How much should we do? • Fine tune intended outcome to help fine tune overall grant • All funders want to feel like they are the catalyst for change- • reseller institute started outcomes measurements
<p>What chance are you trying to affect? then design follow-up to make sure you are creating that change (not always interview)</p>	<p>Are follow-ups best through interview?</p>
<p>Need to demonstrate...because of our work there are x new farms started in our target area...or we were working with farmers in yr. 3-7 and we have x farmers moved through that process.</p> <p><u>Anu asked for more clarity about what USDA meant by 6000 new farmers - turns out the number was basically pulled from thin air</u></p> <p>***need to capture in data and stories and merge.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What does 6000k new farmers started mean, people are in a process, where do they start? • A lot of the farmers we work with are dairy- taking over family business, transition from dairy to beef or value added, with cheese operation, I consider that a new farmer or beginning farmer
<p>Who has done a good job at evaluation?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In measuring farm

	<p>profitability...there external factors driving profitability outside of their program...use a before and after survey to tie...because farms are more confident with quickbooks or marketing, or web -based marketing they have increased xxx, out a story on it., give it a face that summarizes the story.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ways you describe your work/results 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •
<p>Nancy has tips on her website to increase survey response</p>	
<p>What tools are you looking for?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can ask 2 questions...quick, simple in x months... • May need to make phone calls to get the answers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are so focused on planning the program and getting people to it- then following up 6months or 1year later, how do we do that, when do I have time? • Need to explain to farmers why we need this information
	<p>2 other reason for evaluation:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Part of the learning, reinforcing value 2. 2. Modeling behavior, want people to be conscious about what they are doing and what they intend to do. Also part of the learning

Evaluate actions See slide