

Ag Econ

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1. Accession 0223992	Agency Identification No. 2. NIFA 3. LA.B	5. Work Unit/Project No. LAB94065	6. Status Annual Report
7. Title Assessing the Consumer Behavior, Market Coordination and Performance of the Consumer-Oriented Fruit and Vegetable Sector			
12. Investigator Name(s) (Last Name and Initials) Hinson, R. A.			
20. Termination Date 09/30/2015		40. Period Covered (mo/da/year): 01/01/2011 TO 12/31/2011	
Outputs: A dataset was created from a survey designed to establish a baseline from which to measure change in Louisiana specialty crop production and the impact of the Louisiana MarketMaker program. Louisiana's first state-wide farmers' market managers conference was conducted to enhance skills and broaden information networks of market managers and their boards. Hands-on educational workshops and seminars by experts in market promotion, operation, and networking opportunity were included. Presentations at producer meetings; a booth at the Louisiana Restaurant Association's trade show; a display at the Louisiana state fair targeting businesses and consumers; working with a New Orleans French Farmers' Market Corporation event (Gulf Alive); and planning an Agribusiness Council dinner that featured local products were outputs of the project. A tool box was designed to assist extension personnel with media spots. A meeting of business leaders explored the possibility of a food hub for Louisiana. Two professionals were trained in the Retail Ready program at the University of Kentucky. Costs of production for vegetable crops were estimated and published.			
Outcomes/Impacts: Analysis of the database will improve understanding and support for Louisiana MarketMaker and the Blueberry Community of Practice. Trained and informed managers will operate more effectively in consumer-oriented markets. More consumers will be served at existing markets, and training and education should support creation of more markets in unserved areas. Louisiana MarketMaker producer registrations have occurred at a moderate, steady pace. For the year, Louisiana MarketMaker was third among 20 participating states for hits (more than 131,000 monthly) and total users (6,596 monthly). There were 143 registered farmers, 49 fishermen, five wineries and 173 farmers' markets. The Food Hub meeting brought together representatives of retail grocers, wholesalers, marketing companies, and public institutions, and a commitment to study and gather information about hubs. Agents were trained in the Retail Ready program, and are working to modify published materials to be appropriate to Louisiana. Net returns over a range of yields and prices were calculated for 20 vegetable crops, and machinery size and market channel combinations resulted in 37 budgets. Higher technology and larger equipment resulted in higher total costs but lower per unit costs. The high technologies used in strawberry and bell pepper production were more profitable only if yield assumptions were achieved. Returns usually were at least sufficient to cover direct production costs. Most crops had returns above direct expenses that exceeded \$1000.00 per acre with direct marketing. Knowledge of variable and fixed costs of production provides guidance and enables growers to make informed decisions about price setting. Lenders use updated information about production costs to make decisions on loans, as do government service providers, industries that support agriculture, Extension specialists, and others. These budgets also provide a basis for strengthening production agriculture through improved planning and risk management.			
Publications: Hinson, R. 2011. Projected Costs for Selected Louisiana Vegetable Crops 2011. AEA No. 270, Department of Agricultural Economics and Agribusiness, LAES, LSU AgCenter, La. State University, Baton Rouge, 89 pp. R. Hinson. 2011. "Commercial Vegetables Situation and Outlook" in 2011 Outlook For Louisianas Agriculture. Louisiana State University AgCenter, Department of Agricultural Economics and Agribusiness Staff Paper SP 2011-03, March 2011.			
Participants: R.A. Hinson (PI), LSU AgCenter.			
Target Audiences:			

Louisiana consumer and fresh market businesses.

Project Modifications:

Nothing significant to report during this reporting period.

Approved (Signature)	Title	Date
		