

OVERCOMING BARRIERS YOUNG/BEGINNING FARMERS AND RANCHERS FACE WHEN ENTERING INTO AGRICULTURE PRODUCTION

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ISSUE SUMMARY

What is the issue?

- Barriers faced by young and/or beginning farmers and ranchers directly affect both our consumers and our environment
- The threat of the “Aging Farmer”
- Barriers identified:
 - Access to land (especially for 1st generation farmers)
 - Financial risk and credit worthiness
 - Time management
 - Family dynamics

ISSUE SUMMARY

Why is this an issue?

- Food and fiber are derived from farming...who will feed and clothe the world in the next 50 years?
- One farmer can feed up to 155 individuals annually
- Farmer and ranch families comprise less than 2% of the U.S. population
- Per the USDA Census of Agriculture, the average age of the American farmer continues to increase
- The percentage of farmers under age 45 continues to decrease

ISSUE SUMMARY

Why Continued...

- Access to land is limited
 - More rural lands turning commercial
- Difficulty obtaining financing at reasonable rates and terms
 - Large down payments
 - No “history” or “experience” in farming affecting credit worthiness
- Balancing a full-time job off the farm while starting up a farming operation
- Dealing with family members who hold different visions and expectations (when dealing with generational farming)

STAKEHOLDERS

- Panel included:
 - Steve Johnson, a multi-generational farmer, Secretary of Florida Farm Bureau and Florida Citrus Mutual board member
 - Cliff Coddington, Manager of Longino Ranch, 1st Vice President of Florida Cattleman's Association
 - Dan Schabilion, District Conservationist at USDA Natural Resource and Conservation Service
 - Tiffany Bailey, a successful, young, female sod farmer, 2019 CARES recipient

STAKEHOLDERS CONTINUED...

- Our “NRLI” Participants included:
 - Florida Farm Bureau’s Young Farmers and Ranchers Leadership Group
 - Individuals 18-35 who are involved in the agriculture industry in varying capacities and represent 1st generation farmers as well as multigeneration farming operations

NRLI TECHNIQUES

- Facilitated Meeting, with full use of meeting design elements
 - Icebreaker, Agenda Ratification, Roles Overview, Group Norms
- Participatory Learning, Discussion and Feedback
- Panel Prep with guided questioning
- Stakeholder panel, facilitated by Matt and Katrina
- Planned Breaks, with time for discussion with stakeholder panel
- Group Review, to summarize practicum and discuss next steps
- Visual Aids, including agenda, pre- set information, and activities

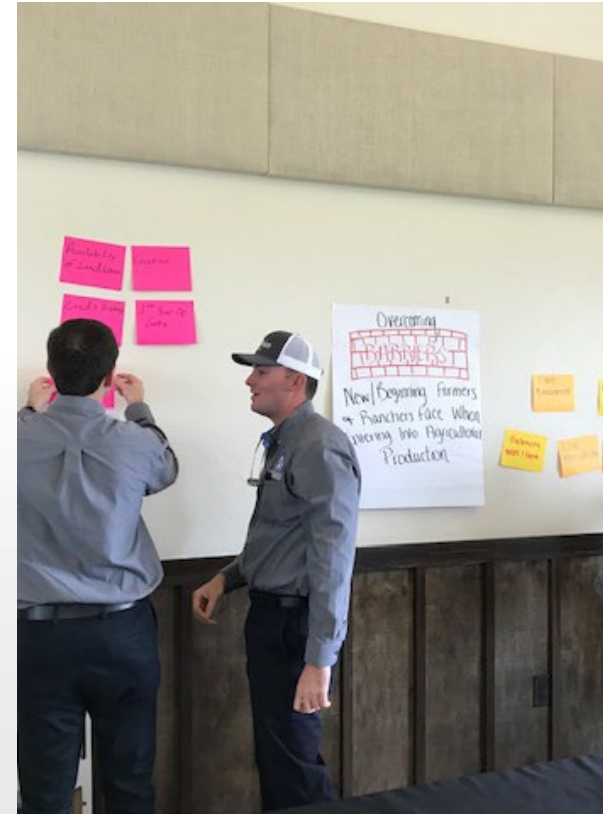
GROUP DISCUSSION

Our participants broke out into groups of 3-4 and were tasked with identifying what they felt were barriers to entry in the agriculture industry



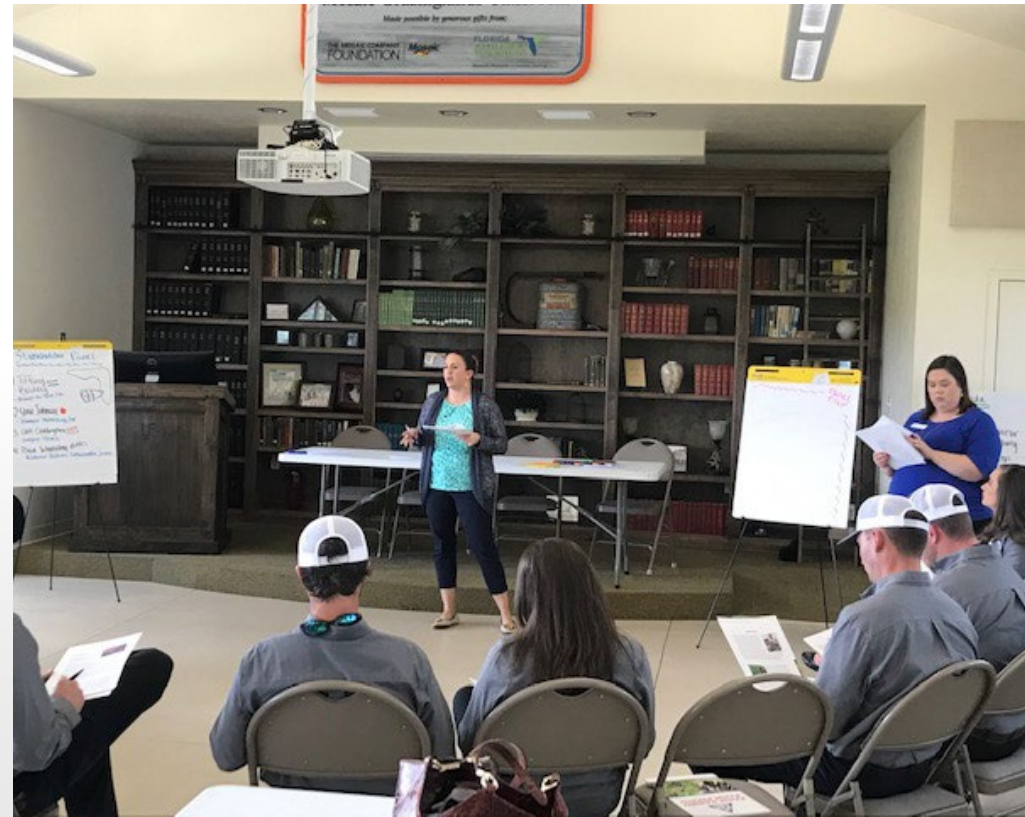
STICKY NOTE ORGANIZATION

- The participants put all their sticky notes on the wall.
- We made them group them together by commonality/similarity
- We established the key barriers to entry with this exercise



PANEL PREP

- Cacee and Katrina reviewed the panelists and their bios with the group
- We created a list of questions for the panel



OUTCOME

- Excellent participation – better than expected!
- Key barriers identified: land, financing, time management, family dynamics
- Agreed lack of knowledge on available resources
 - Cost-share programs
 - Conservation programs
 - Beginning farmer and rancher loan programs
- FL Farm Bureau YFR Group provided excellent feedback
- Future plans include development of tangible and digital toolkit available through primary agricultural organizations for the public

LESSONS LEARNED

- What did you learn?
 - This is a real problem!
 - Resources need to be more readily available to target audiences
 - Family dynamics play a strong role
 - Balancing off-farm work and on farm work is a dilemma
- Key takeaways?
 - Agriculture organizations need to do better at providing resourceful information to young and beginning farmers
 - We in the industry need to continue to tell our story and encourage others to have an active role as well

LESSONS LEARNED CONTINUED...

- What would you do different?
 - Have a stakeholder from a financial institution such as a credit union or bank
 - Have more time to interact with our participants
- What worked well?
 - Everything!
 - Utilization of groups
 - Sticky notes – group of categories on the wall
 - Panel prep
 - Questions for all stakeholders

CHALLENGES WE FACED

- Figuring out who to and who not to have on stake holder panel
- The location was main driver in stakeholder panel
- One panelist dropped out 2 days before and we used a substitute
- Time factor with everything going so well. (Trying to stay on time with so many good questions.)
- Sometimes we overthink on expectations

NEXT STEPS

- Future plans?
 - Gather additional information from stakeholders missed (i.e. financial lender)
 - Prepare a digital and tangible toolkit
 - House in USDA offices, extension offices, Farm Bureau Offices, etc.
 - Access to toolkit online
- How will this experience impact work or professional life?
 - We are agriculture, at home and at work!
 - We have tools to help us better engage with our stakeholders to handle complex issues
 - We have truly learned how to lead, how to listen, how to observe and overall, how to work together!