



# NORTHEAST TEXAS INITIATIVE FOR COOPERATIVE DEVELOPMENT

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## INTRODUCTION

In the Northeast Texas counties of Delta, Franklin, Hopkins, Hunt, Rains, Rockwall, and Wood, the largest minorities are Hispanics (7.42%) and Black or African American (5.99%) (US Census, 2010).

Few small, socially-disadvantaged (SSD) producers are organized in non-for-profit organizations, co-op like institutions, community based organizations (CBOs), or cooperatives.

CBOs have developed networks of loyal, enthusiastic, and friendly small-acreage producers, willing to help and make a difference.

Universities usually have the human resources, facilities, experience and long standing relationships with the stakeholders and community leaders to help minorities in agricultural related businesses.

## NEED

To discuss the logic, benefits and challenges of forming a partnership between an educational institution and a CBO primarily composed of SSD producers.

To report efforts of finding win-win solutions that contribute to the long-term sustainability of agriculture, natural resources, and quality of life of SSD producers across the nation.

## HOW IT WORKS

The project used a partnership approach to recruit, identify the needs, and provide technical assistance to regional SSD producers.

Faculty and industry experts delivered presentations, demonstrations, and workshops:

- To promote teamwork and cooperation,
- To provide technical assistance in product and service improvement,
- To promote feasibility, sustainability, and marketing,
- To introduce concepts in finance, profitability, and business management.

Faculty and qualified graduate students also provided one-on-one technical assistance, information, and advice; and conducted research on topics of interest to our project clientele.

## GENERAL OBJECTIVE

To provide technical assistance to SSD producers and to help producers and farm associations improve communication and expand their scope of business and networking relationships.



*Product and Service Improvement Strategies*



*Importance of Networking and Teamwork*



*Establishing Local Markets: Sustainability, Feasibility, and Marketing*



Exploring similar partnerships is encouraged to effectively outreach small, socially-disadvantaged producers.

## BENEFITS

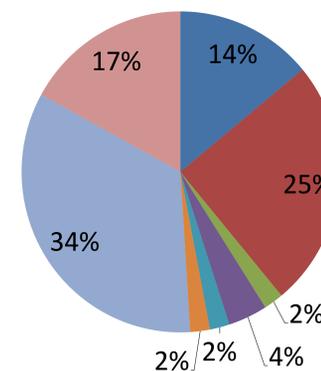
A partnership between an educational institution and a CBO has many benefits:

- Division of responsibilities,
- Relatively easier to get the project running (including assessing the needs of SSD producers),
- Sharing pre-established clientele of producers,
- A bigger pool of resources to disseminate information about upcoming events.

## CHALLENGE

To find a leader among the participants, willing to stand out and take the initiative of starting a cooperative.

## COSTS



Budget = \$175,000

- A part-time salary for the Project Director
- Part-time salaries or wages for Graduate Students or Student Workers
- Travel expenses
- Stipends to university collaborators
- Consulting services
- Computers and miscellaneous supplies
- A sub-budgeted allotment for the partnering institution
- Indirect cost

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The NTICD project (RBS-USDA # 50-016-504067405) was funded by the Small Socially-Disadvantaged Producer Grant (SSDPG), Rural Business Cooperative Service, Rural Development, United States Department of Agriculture.