



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.



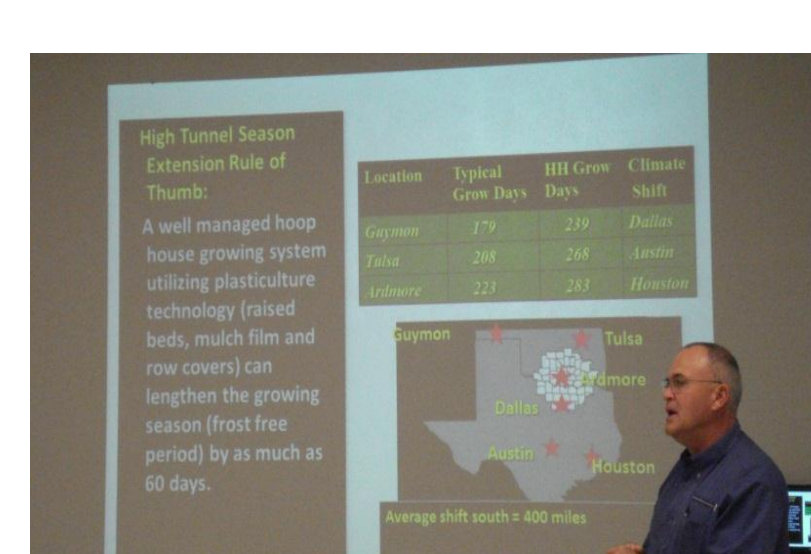
Product and Service Improvement Strategies



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

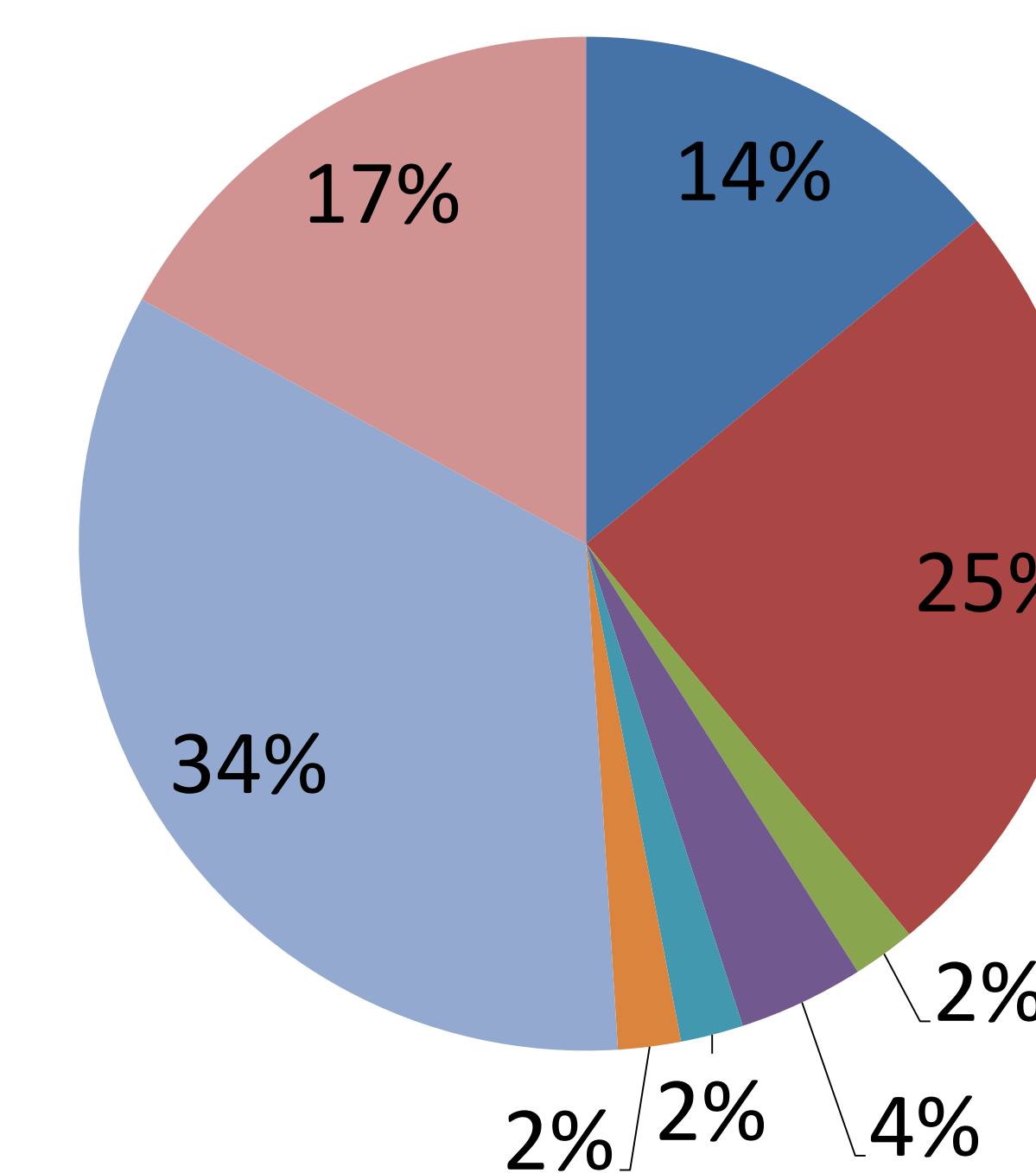
A partnership between an educational institution and a CBO has many benefits:

- 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

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