

2004 PROGRAM WORK TEAM ANNUAL REPORT

Agricultural Marketing and Management PWT

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The mission of the Agricultural Marketing and Management Team is to give New York food and agriculturally related businesses a competitive advantage versus the rest of the world by significantly improving their knowledge of marketing as well as improving their general management capacities and skills. The team is committed to exploring new ways to improve communication across faculty on campus and between on-campus, off-campus and external stakeholders. Major programs have been developed to accomplish the mission of the team

The activities of this PWT over the last 3 years can be divided into three distinct categories: 1) formal education and outreach, 2) assistance to individual farmers, groups of farmers and agribusinesses, and 3) communication among team members and stakeholders using a team approach.

1. Education and Outreach

In terms of formal education and outreach, the following were some specific activities: an Annual winter Agribusiness Outlook conference (attendance = 150-200); an annual 2-day marketing workshop in September (attendance = 40-70); an annual 2-day seminar for Northeast cooperative managers and directors in March (attendance = 150), an annual 3-day conference for future cooperative leaders in July (attendance = 60); and many regional programs including business management training, marketing network groups, and marketing workshops. In addition, the first joint produce marketing conference with Michigan State was organized in March 2004. The success of this has ensured a continuation of this collaboration. The 2nd Produce Marketing conference is planned for February 2005 in New York. Marketing tools have also been shared at the Farm Business Management Retreat and other venues. While PWT members directly organize the above, members also frequently discuss these marketing and management topics at other statewide and national conferences as well as hundreds of smaller regional meetings. All the above activities have formal evaluations and participants have responded very positively. In addition, PWT members have written numerous articles for different types of media (i.e. journals and department publications, as well as the agricultural and general press). The popular monthly article series entitled "Smart Marketing" is distributed statewide and is used in publications throughout the Extension network around the country.

In January 2004, the annual meeting for the PWT took place. In attendance were 7 College Faculty and staff, 4 Extension Staff and 1 from New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets. Other PWTs that recognize the need for better marketing education communication and information have become more interested in this PWT and were well represented. These included Fruit and Small Farms. Resources were shared and a presentation on the new NY Agriculture Innovation Center was given. Other professional development presentations included information on the developing traceability tools for agricultural food processors.

2. Assistance to individual Farmers

Direct assistance to farmers and agribusinesses due to the extent of the work across the state, is difficult to document. Some of the activities in this area include: facilitating strategic planning, teaching and reviewing business and marketing planning, assisting in market research and financial issues, and identifying outside experts to help the agribusiness. Specifically, some of the

recent activities include: working with producers on value-added dairy opportunities, assisting producers in business plan development (NxLevel; Tilling the Soil of Opportunity and Onondaga County business planning programs), the NY Ag Innovation Center which is providing direct marketing and management assistance for producers developing added value products, connecting NY growers with NYC and other markets, supporting market development for beach plum as a new crop, and facilitating regional agriculture promotion and marketing programs. Example of some tangible outcomes are: NYC chefs are inquiring about purchasing and featuring beach plum products, over 500 producers are receiving assistance in developing their value-added business through NYAIC, 15 producers received formal education in Business and Marketing Plan writing through NxLevel training.

3. Communication between Team Members and stakeholders

We have recognized the benefits of taking a team approach to solving problems that are common to team members. New efforts have been initiated to increase communication among PWT members and with other PWTs. A list-serve has been established for communication, resource sharing and event posting. A PWT web site (www.marketingpwt.aem.cornell.edu) is now available for an information-clearing house for all members' and other related programs' web sites. A newsletter of resources has been developed on a bimonthly basis to collate current marketing resources and information of interest. This newsletter is circulated to 58 users on the PWT list-serve and others on the website. The PWT now has a table top display putting it in a position to present information and recruit new PWT partners across the state at suitable events. Over the last 3 years, a number of the team members have collaborated on new projects including a program for women-in-agriculture, development of a comprehensive business planning and marketing curriculum, and are heavily involved in the newly established NY Agricultural Innovation Center. The PWT members are also active in a number of interdisciplinary projects with members of related PWTs.

The Agricultural Marketing and Management Program Work Team has developed some excellent tools over the last 3 years, with which to achieve it's mission. It is the intention of the group to continue meeting (annual meeting March, 2005) and improving these tools through communication of team members (particularly using the Marketing In-service training and the web site), in order to enhance New York food and agriculturally related businesses' knowledge of marketing and management skills.