

Title:

Small Fruit Extension Programs in Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Tennessee

Project type:

Extension

Principal Investigators:

Jonathan R. Schultheis
Professor
Dept. Horticultural Science
Box 7609
Raleigh, NC 27695-7609

David W. Monks
Professor
Dept. Horticultural Science
Box 7609
Raleigh, NC 27695-7609

Email: jonathan_schultheis@ncsu.edu

david_monks@ncsu.edu

Objectives:

The objective of this grant was to enhance educational efforts and facilitate sharing of information by extension faculty with small fruit responsibilities across member states in the Southern Region Small Fruit Consortium. The states include Georgia, South Carolina, Tennessee and North Carolina.

Justification:

The land grant universities in Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina and Tennessee have experienced severe budget cutbacks over the last few years. In fact, as these budgets have been cut, faculty positions and budgets have been reduced, making it difficult for specialists to travel and assist extension agents across states in the consortium. Crops such as the small fruit crops are not only important crops but they are also crops which have the greatest potential for replacing crops like tobacco where acreage is being lost. Thus, there is an increased demand for information and assistance from specialists at the land grant universities. Over the last few years, specialists responsible for small fruit crops have traveled to different states in the consortium to assist with educational meetings. For example, a strawberry production specialist in NC has traveled to SC to assist with grower meetings. However, it is doubtful that without a funding source of that specialists would travel out of their home state to assist with another state's education meetings in small fruit crops.

Methodologies:

The support is/was specifically designated to cover or partially cover travel expenses for out-of-state speakers when the host state issues an invitation to a small fruit extension meeting. The speaker can be outside the member consortium states if that best suits the needs of the state.

To access these funds, the funds are/were held in a separate account in the Horticultural Science Department at NC State University. The account name is SMALL FRUIT EXTENSION PROGRAM.

In order for the invited out-of state speaker to be reimbursed, they must complete a travel reimbursement form. These can/could be obtained in book keeping in the horticultural science department at NC State University.

Travel that can be reimbursed is/was airfare, mileage, hotel, and meals. Receipts must /were to be obtained and turned in for airfare and hotel. A zero balance for hotel receipts is/was necessary for reimbursement. Mileage reimbursement for persons using their personal vehicle is 23 cents per mile for employees from NC, and 37.5 cents per mile for those not employed in NC. Meals are/were determined on a per diem basis; \$6.75 for breakfast, 8.75 for lunch, and \$15 for dinner in NC and \$17 for dinner outside of NC. Breakfast will/was to be reimbursed only if one leaves before 6 am, and dinner if one does not return until after 8 pm.

Results:

To date, some of these funds have been accessed by Clemson University for small fruit extension programs to support travel expenses for an out-of-state speaker. Barclay Poling was invited to give a presentation regarding strawberry production. Additional funds are currently available and the expectation is that they will be completely utilized over the winter meeting season.

Conclusion:

The expectation is that this travel money will foster utilization of small fruit expertise across state lines that might not have normally occurred.

Impact Statement:

More growers and allied industry can receive the most current information as it relates to small fruit production and improve their management practices and economic return.

Citations:

None