



Kitsap
County

WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY
EXTENSION



FOOD SYSTEMS & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

2016

BY THE NUMBERS

- 13 classes were organized by the Regional Small Farms program that took place between the three counties (4 were held in Kitsap)
- 154 participants took part in workshops
- 7 master farmers took part in the Kitsap Farm Internship program with 15 interns participating, representing the largest intern program in the State.

ISSUE

The 2012 Census of Agriculture shows alarming trends in Kitsap County, WA with a 24% decrease in the market value of products sold since 2007 with 605 farmers earning less than \$10,000, representing 86% of all farms in Kitsap County. This decline can be attributed to a lack of markets, where farmers have few options besides seasonal, weekly farmers' markets, a farm stand or CSA members to sell their products. Locally sourced foods represent less than one percent of the nearly \$1 billion County residents spend annually in the entire food economy. The 2011 Kitsap County Strategic Agriculture Plan and Inventory identifies 1) the need to grow the local market for crops and animal products and support farmers' markets and other local sales outlets; and 2) expand access for local foods to schools, food banks, grocers and restaurants, and diverse neighborhoods as a key strategies to strengthen the local food economy.

RESPONSE

WSU Kitsap County has developed a Regional Small Farms Program and the Kitsap Farm Internship Program to address the increasing demand for hands-on farmer training; to address the gap in the workforce needs of small farms; and increase the technical and entrepreneurial skills of new and beginning farmers.

WSU Regional Small Farms Program – Kitsap, Jefferson, Clallam Counties

WSU Kitsap County Extension helped to establish a regional small farms program with Clallam and Jefferson WSU Extension offices to tap into the well-networked and established farming programs, streamline processes and reduce the cost to operate such a program. Four learning tracks developed, Livestock Systems, Soil Management, Seed Systems, and Pasture Management.

WSU Regional Small Farms Program coordinated and hosted 4 classes and events in Kitsap County:

- Women in Agriculture Conference (20 participants). This conference was designed for women who are currently farmers and also new and aspiring farmers. The day of learning and networking focused on understanding personality types to inform communication styles to help run a business and work with customers.
- On-Farm Composting (25 participants). This workshop was designed to educate farmers about the lifecycle of compost, how to calculate compost recipes, and on-farm management methods with Dr. Andy Bary, WSU Puyallup Research Station soil scientist.
- Pasture Management 103 (27 participants). This workshop covered pasture renovation methods, including re-seeding, seeding methods, and species selection for optimal pasture. Hay selection and quality within a livestock rotation included, plus livestock nutritional needs.



RESPONSE CONT.

- Intro to Sustainable Pork Production (17 participants). This workshop was an introductory short course for farmers interested in small-scale pork production with WSU Livestock Specialist Dr. Susan Kerr.

Kitsap Farm Internship Program

The Kitsap Farm Internship Program was developed and piloted in 2016 to provide a multidisciplinary study into sustainable agriculture for new and beginning farmers. Developed by farmers and the WSU

Extension offices in Kitsap and Jefferson Counties, the program combines formal instruction with a field-based internship on a Kitsap County farm.

An innovative, collaborative intern teaching model and curriculum was developed and successfully implemented. This model created a cohort of master farmers and interns where each farmer taught all interns a sustainable agriculture topic of their choice. This curriculum was paired with the WSU-led, on-farm workshops and allowed interns to earn CEUs through WSU.

Each intern worked with their farm host to develop an individual learning plan that guided their course of study during the program. Daily hands-on farm work reinforced newly learned farming practices. This guided farm work placed emphasis on the practices of sustainable agriculture, including business planning, integration of annual and perennial crops, animal production, soil health, annual and perennial crop production, weed and pest control, and harvesting, processing, and marketing.

IMPACTS

- 90% of participants in the Intro to Sustainable Pork Production class reported that the workshop greatly increased their knowledge and skills and 85% of participants said they would recommend the class to others
- 93% of participants in the Soil Science class would recommend the class to others and 90% reported the class was very useful with very high quality of information
- 100% of participants in the Pasture Management class would recommend this class to others and 86% reported that the course provided great value in increasing their knowledge and skills
- 85% of participants in the Women in Agriculture Conference reported that after the event, they have new skills to change their business communication style when necessary
- A new WSU position, the Regional Small Farms Coordinator, was created and funded by WSU Pullman and WSU Extension offices in Clallam, Jefferson and Kitsap Counties.

COLLABORATORS

WSU Jefferson and Clallam Extension offices, WSU Puyallup Research Center, WSU Mt. Vernon Research Center, Kitsap Conservation District