Measuring Impacts for Sustainable Agriculture Programming
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Measuring and Reporting Economic Impacts


The Farm Financial Analysis Training (FFAT) course covers fundamental skills and concepts in liquidity, profitability, solvency, and efficiency. The research reported here identifies and measures the impacts of FFAT on participants including: 1) perceived gains in knowledge, 2) changes in management behavior, 3) changes in specific farm assets and profitability, and 4) changes in attitudes regarding farm finance. FFAT is demonstrated to provide new and at-risk producers with effective educational materials that will significantly increase: their knowledge about financial statements, their use of financial management tools, and farm profit and net worth, and improve their attitudes when dealing with agricultural lenders.


In the future, Cooperative Extension has an unprecedented opportunity to provide education in conjunction with economic, technological, environmental, and social impact or risk assessments. These assessments will become more crucial to the quality of life on our planet and will affect the lives of millions of people, including those yet to be born. Decisions about impact and risk assessments shouldn’t be made by experts alone, but should be formed by participation on the part of an informed general public.


This article describes benefits of documenting program impact, components of high-quality impact statements, and specific programs and methods developed to document the economic impact of personal finance programs upon the lives of Extension clientele.

This article describes cost-benefit analysis as a technique for comparing program outcomes to inputs to demonstrate accountability. It also illustrates the cost-benefit concept with two specific examples.


The article describes a study of characteristics and behaviors of a convenience sample of participants in Investing For Your Future, a Cooperative Extension basic investing home study course. The article concludes with five implications for Extension educators.


This article describes five methods to quantify the economic impact of health education programs: participant surveys, time value of money analyses, extrapolation from published cost estimates, cost-benefit analyses, and return on investment.