

# ANNIE'S PROJECT

## REACHES WOMEN WITH AGRICULTURAL INTERESTS

### Situation:

Annie's Project is a methodology for delivering multi-session educational programs to women farmers and ranchers that leads to transformational learning. The concept was developed in Iowa and has been popular across the country – so much so Wyoming constituents were requesting the program.

The program responds to a need by women involved in agriculture to build management skills and connect with peers through fellowship.

Educators facilitating the Annie's Project program must be trained by the originators of the program (Iowa State University Extension). In 2011, state specialist Cole Ehmke wrote a proposal to the USDA Risk Management Agency seeking funding to provide training for Wyoming educators in Annie's Project. Ehmke and area educator Tammie Jensen had been interested in working with the Wyoming Women in Ag organization, which had requested the program.

The application was successful, and training was offered to eight educators in November 2011. That same winter, Jensen offered a program in Lusk, and southeast area educator Jeff Edwards, with educator Mae Smith observing, offered a program in Torrington. Jensen and Edwards



had classes of six sessions with about three presenters per session, and a meal was provided each session.

The response was excellent. Both facilitators found a high level of interest in response to their marketing. The work of the local facilitator is significant. Local steering committees gauge interest of area clientele and identify topics of interest; meetings plan and build interest in the program; class dates are set; potential speakers and content experts are identified and vetted; agendas are finalized; food (and people to assist with the food) is planned;

interaction and feedback with the participants is maintained; and the aspirations associated with Annie's Project programs are maintained.

### Impacts:

Sixteen women participated in the Lusk-based sessions in January and February. Topics included True Colors personality type assessments, determining the cost per pound of protein in beef, determining the value of added grain for beef, goal setting, lending, strategic marketing, non-titled property transfer, financial statements, enterprise budgets,

farming with disabilities, exploring new markets, and business transfer and succession.

In the Torrington-based classes, held in spring 2012, 24 women participated. Educational topics included the Keirseley temperament sorter and generational communication, social media, Quick-Books, AgrAbility, agriculture and current legal issues, entrepreneurship and value Added agriculture. A PKG (perceived knowledge gained) was established for each of the topics and ranged by topic from 27.5 to 105.3 percent. Participants were asked to self-evaluate the level of knowledge they have concerning a topic prior to and after the presentation. PKG is Post-session rating minus Pre-session rating divided by the Pre-session rating and multiplied by 100.

Other data collected in Torrington, using a 1-5 modified Likert scale (1=low value and 5=high value) indicate that the program was valued (4.6), that the information will be used by the participants (4.6), and the program will be highly recommended to others (4.9). Two-thirds of the

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participants are willing to serve on a steering committee to help develop programming for a future Annie's Project session.

General comments from participants include:

Excellent program! Thank you! Some type of occasional follow-up info/meeting would be great. Maybe encourage/start a younger population to join Homemakers! Provide info on their groups/meetings. Have barely given the (registration) fee a 2nd thought. The evenings and education were worth so much more!

This was such a great experience! I had no expectations going into it and met, learned, shared, received tenfold. Thank you!

Great job everyone! The first [Annie's Project] was a success!

Annie's Project in Wyoming expanded this winter with programs in Converse and Niobrara counties (a Level II program of further content offerings for the

original class members to continue their affiliation), the Wind River Reservation, Fremont County, and possibly Goshen County again. Funds to support the program at \$1,500 each will be provided by Farm Credit Services of America (in a special arrangement to support Annie's Projects in the four states served by FCSA).



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<b>Annie's Project Evaluation Data (Overall Program)</b>	Likert Ranking 1=poor or not at all to 5=Excellent or very much so
What is the overall score you would give this Annie's Project	4.6
Did Annie's Project meet your expectations?	4.5
Will you use the information presented?	4.6
Would you encourage others to participate in Annie's Project?	4.9
Are you interested in serving on the Steering Committee for a 2013 Annie's Project in Goshen County?	3.6
Sample Size	20

