

IMPACT

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The benefits of small-scale agriculture: The Cabin Fever workshop series

The Situation

Increasingly consumers are looking for locally produced food. Farmer's markets, organic produce, and supporting local agriculture producers are becoming more popular. This trend provides benefits not only to local agricultural producers, but is providing consumers with greater choices for fresh farm products, and is creating a niche for smaller-scale agricultural producers to produce locally grown food for direct local consumption rather than commodities for national and international markets. This has opened up opportunities for viable agricultural operations on smaller acreage.

As a response to this the USDA and many land-grant universities are supporting programs that encourage small acreage agricultural production. As part of the University of Idaho's College of Agricultural and Life Sciences Programs of Distinction (POD) initiative, small-scale, local, agriculture was identified as a potential POD.

In Clearwater County and surrounding area, there are many new landowners who could benefit from putting their land to more productive use, as well as generate income for themselves and the larger county economy.

Our Response

Cabin Fever is an annual three-week series of workshops on home gardening and small-scale agriculture. Over the last two years programs have been presented on the economics of beginning small-scale agricultural operations; presentations by local individuals who have successfully launched small-scale agricultural operations; and instruction on the raising of poultry for the sale of both eggs and meat. In



Summer Hill Farm, a natural foods and produce farm that sells their homegrown goods at the Orofino Farmer's Market.

addition, workshops have included presentations on landscaping, gardening, and pruning.

Program Outcomes

Thirty-three people attended the series in 2012, and 51 in 2013 (a 54.5% increase from 2012). Attendees reported an average 54% and 65% increase in knowledge in 2012 and 2013 respectively. All individuals attending in 2012 reported that they would put in practice the techniques learned.

The Future

While monitoring client interest, it is the goal to increasingly focus on small-scale agriculture topics for future installments of the Cabin Fever series in an attempt to provide landowners with the best available information on ways they can make more productive use of their land for economic and land health benefits, as well as information on government programs available to assist them. Generating more land

based economic activity while promoting sound land stewardship is an important goal of Extension programming in Clearwater County.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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