

FINAL REPORT

Southern Ohio Agricultural and Community Development
Foundation

General Agricultural Grants Program Impact Evaluation

Through
Mailed Questionnaires

Thomas M. Archer

April 11, 2008

TABLE OF CONTENTS:

Executive Summary3

Purpose.....5

Procedure5

Data Analysis5

Limitations5

Findings:

 Response Rate6

 Characteristics of Respondents.....6

 Benefits Reported8

 Changes11

 Other Comments about the SOACDF General Agricultural Grants Program15

 Other Needs That Might Be Addressed by the SOACDF17

Conclusions.....20

Appendix A

 Ability to Generalize to All General Agricultural Grant Recipients21

Appendix B

 Questionnaire.....23

Appendix C

 Changes Needed in the Program – From Analysis of Q1627

 Changes Needed in the Program – From Analysis of Q1731

Executive Summary

Southern Ohio Agricultural and Community Development Foundation General Agricultural Grants Program Impact Evaluation through Mailed Questionnaires

Purpose: To review the process of funding General Agricultural projects by the Southern Ohio Agricultural and Community Development Foundation (SOACDF) and to identify changes made, outcomes achieved, and future aspirations of the program participants.

Procedure: A mailed questionnaire was sent to the 2346 recipients who received General Agricultural Grants from 2002 thru 2007. The questionnaire was reproduced in a booklet format and included questions relating to: Descriptions of crop and livestock farming enterprises in 2001 and 2007; Personal, farm, and community benefits of the General Agricultural Grants; Enterprise Income and Expense changes as a result of the General Agricultural Grants; and Application and Personal Demographics

Data Analysis: Quantitative data were entered into Excel and imported into the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS), where data were cleaned, variables named, and value levels labeled. T-tests and Chi-Square statistical tests were performed to detect statistical significant differences. Procedures were used to confirm that the findings could be generalized to the entire population of grant recipients 2002-2007.

Major Findings: The response rate was 56.4%; 71.8% of the respondents received 50% or less from their farming enterprise, while 10.4% indicated all income was from the farm; 71.9% of the respondents were 50 or older, and 87.5% were male.

The fifteen (15) most reported benefits of SOACDF General Agricultural Grants were (Number Reporting and % of Respondents): Tobacco Foundation Dollars Roll Over in the Local Economy (928, 70.5%); Improved Livestock Fencing (902, 68.5%); Reduced Liability (754, 57.3%); Improved Efficiency of Operation (734, 55.8%); New Farm Equipment (696, 52.9%); Improved Livestock Handling Facilities (685, 52.1%); Increase Property Values (681, 51.7%); Improved Livestock Feeding Facilities (618, 47.0%); Reduced Stress (614, 46.7%); Daily Farm Chores are Easier (552, 41.9%); Improved Likelihood that My Children and Grandchildren Will Stay on the Farm (527, 40.0%); Increased Farm/ Business Equity (523, 39.7%); Freed Up Operation Funds for Other Improvements (521, 39.6%); Improved Overall Management Practices (515, 39.1%); and Improved Livestock Genetics (469, 35.6%)

From 2001 to 2007 Corn, Soybean, Forage and Other Crop acres all increased for grant recipients. Tobacco acres decreased. The number of head of Cattle and the number of head of Goats also increased over this six year period. Those commodities that did not statistically change were: Wheat acres; Hog numbers; Sheep numbers; and Other Livestock numbers.

A total of \$16,669,500 increase in income over the six years was estimated from 56.4% (response rate) of the grant recipients. Extrapolating this to the entire list of grant recipients, this could be an increase in income of \$29,555,851 over all recipients from 2002 through 2007. Likewise, a total of \$9,262,500 decrease in expenses over the six years was estimated by the grant recipients. Extrapolating this to the entire list of grant recipients, this could be a decrease in expenses of \$16,422,872 over all recipients from 2002 through 2007. Adding the estimated Increase in Income and estimated Decrease in Expenses, totals an extra \$45,978,723 was made available to all grant recipients over the six years studied.

In response to the open-ended questions, many comments were general in nature about how the General Agricultural Grants program was a good program and provided much needed help. Another high number of responses related specific ways in which the funding helped the

individual grant recipients. Many other comments were emphatic that the program was essential to individuals and communities in the tobacco region. Responding to what was still needed, the majority of the responses listed specific needs of the individual responding, and were divided into categories of: Buildings/ fencing; Tractors/ equipment; Fertility; and More Livestock. A large number of changes needed in the SOACDF grant programs were also presented. Several comments encouraged the continuation of the program.

Conclusions:

- [1] The information from the responses summarized in this report is representative of all the General Agricultural Grant Program recipients for the years 2002-2007.
- [2] Almost 90% of General Agricultural Grant recipients were part-time farmers; 87.5% were males; and 71.9% were 50 years old or older
- [3] Corn, Soybean, and Other Crop acres all increased from 2001 to 2007. Tobacco acres decreased over the same years. The number of head of Cattle and the number of head of Goats also increased over this six year period. Those commodities that did not statistically change were: Wheat acres; Hog numbers; Sheep numbers; and Other Livestock numbers.
- [4] 96.7% of the General Agricultural Grant recipients have realized at least one benefit from the program
- [5] Specific benefits of the General Agricultural Grants program, with the percent of grant recipients realizing that benefit in parentheses were: {a} Tobacco Foundation Dollars Roll Over in the Local Economy (70.5%); {b} Improved Livestock Fencing (68.5%); {c} Reduced Liability (57.3%); {d} Improved Efficiency of Operation (55.8%); {e} New Farm Equipment (52.9%); {f} Improved Livestock Handling Facilities (52.1%); and {g} Increase Property Values (51.7%)
- [6] The total increase in income over the six years from General Agricultural Grant recipient respondents was estimated at \$16,669,500, and the reduction in expenses was estimated at \$9,262,500, for a total of \$25,932,000 in funds available to grant recipients that would not have been available without the General Agricultural Grants. Projected to all grant recipients over six years (considering the response rate of 56.4%), this total grows to \$45,978,723. Over the same six year span, \$19,400,000 was awarded in General Agricultural grants. Therefore, for every grant dollar awarded, \$2.37 was realized in increased income and reduced expenses.
- [7] Since 70.5% of grant recipients reported that these dollars rolled over in the local economy, if the dollars roll over only once, then for every grant dollar awarded, \$4.04 was realized in the local economy ($\$2.37 + (.705 \times \$2.37)$).
- [8] Most responses to the “Other Comments” question fell into the categories of: Good program and provided much help; Changes needed in program; Specific ways it helped individual farmers; and Essential & worthwhile program.
- [9] There were also many responses to the “Other Needs” question. The majority of the responses listed was specific needs of the individual responding, and were divided into categories of: Buildings/fencing; Tractors/equipment; Fertility; and more Livestock. A large number of “Changes Needed” in the program was also presented. There were also several comments that encouraged the continuation of the program.

Study Conducted by:
Thomas M. Archer, Ph.D.
Ohio State University Extension
614-292-0179
Archer.3@osu.edu

Purpose:

To review the process of funding General Agricultural projects by the Southern Ohio Agricultural and Community Development Foundation (SOACDF) and to identify changes made, outcomes achieved, and future aspirations of the program participants.

Procedure:

Based on results from a series of three focus group interviews conducted with recipients of General Agricultural Grants during January 2008, a written questionnaire was created. The questions included: Descriptions of crop and livestock farming enterprises in 2001 and 2007; Personal, farm, and community benefits of the General Agricultural Grants; Enterprise Income and Expense changes as a result of the General Agricultural Grants; and Application and Personal Demographics.

The questionnaire was reproduced in a booklet format and a cover letter developed. The SOACDF staff generated mailing address labels for all General Agricultural Grant recipients from 2002 through 2007. The cover letter, questionnaire, and a return envelop with postage affixed was mailed between February 15-21 to 2346 potential respondents.

Data Analysis:

The questionnaires were returned to the SOACDF office in Hillsboro, and quantitative data entered from February 25 through March 25 into a spreadsheet created by Dr. Archer in Excel. On March 27 the spreadsheet was transferred to Dr. Archer. The Excel spreadsheet was imported into the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS), and data cleaned, variables named, and value levels labeled. It should be noted that in the Findings section below, the totals do not include missing data. That is, not all respondents responded to every question.

The qualitative data (Q16 & Q17) were keyed into a Word document. The data were transferred into an Excel spreadsheet, and each response individually analyzed and sorted into categories developed as responses were reviewed. Counts were made for each of the categories, and representative statements were included in the report.

Limitations:

[1] In addition to the General Agricultural Grants program, the SOACDF manages the Agricultural Diversification Grants Program. The General Agricultural Grants program is available on first-come, first-serve basis with a relatively simple application process, and for grants up to \$1500 per year. The Agricultural Diversification Grants program has a complex application process with amounts awarded up to \$40,000.

Practically all Agricultural Diversification Grant recipients have also received one or more General Agricultural Grants. Many of these grants build on one another, and over a six year period, recipients of both levels of grants find it difficult to separate benefits from each grant program. This was noted during the focus group portion of this evaluation project as well as through findings of the mailed General Agricultural questionnaire. Efforts were made in the data analysis to remove or reduce responses that were clearly describing Agricultural Diversification projects. It is not possible to guarantee that all findings reported here can be attributed to only General Agricultural Program grants.

- [2] The results of this analysis are applicable to the entire population of General Agricultural Grant recipients. However, as noted in Appendix A, the results may be more indicative of participants from the last four years in the General Agricultural Grants Program rather than the entire six years.
- [3] Dimensions of potential benefits that were not included in the questionnaire included improved soil fertility through lime application and grain handling improvements (question #3 on survey). Eighty-five respondents included these with their narrative responses to other benefits of funding from the SOACDF to livestock or crop farming enterprises. It is anticipated that these benefits would have been selected by more respondents if they had been included on the pick list of potential benefits.

Findings:

Response Rate:

A total of 1316 usable questionnaires were returned through March 25. There were also 11 questionnaires returned as undeliverable from the 2346 originally mailed. Therefore, the response rate was 56.4%

Characteristics of Respondents:

Number of respondents by County, Number of Grants received by Year, and the Number of Respondents by Percentage of Total Income Derived from Farm are shown in Tables 1 through 3 respectively. Counties receiving the most grants were Brown, Adams, Gallia, Highland, and Clermont in that order. Most respondents received these grants in the last two years, with less respondents reporting who had received grants three years ago or longer.

71.8% of the respondents received 50% or less from their farming enterprise, while 10.4% indicated all income was from the farm.

71.9% of the respondents were 50 or older, and 87.5% were male. Specific breakdown by age category and gender are indicated in Table 4 and Table 5.

Table 1: Respondents by County	
<i>County</i>	<i>Respondents</i>
Adams	317
Brown	395
Clermont	85
Clinton	2
Gallia	205
Highland	130
Jackson	10
Lawrence	59
Meigs	1
Monroe	7
Noble	3
Pike	8
Ross	3
Scioto	47
No County Selected	44
Total	1316

Table 2: Number of Grants Received by Respondents Each Year	
<i>Year</i>	<i>Respondents Who Received Grant</i>
2002	549
2003	671
2004	816
2005	887
2006	916
2007	912
Total	3531

Table 3: Number of Respondents by Percentage of Total Income Derived from Farm		
<i>Percent of Total Income from Farm</i>	<i>Number of Respondents</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
0-25%	668	54.1%
26-50%	218	17.7%
51-75%	111	9.0%
76-99%	108	8.8%
100%	128	10.4%
Total	1234	100%

Table 4: Age Categories of Respondents		
<i>Category</i>	<i>Number of Respondents</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Less than 20	5	.4%
20-29	35	2.7%
30-39	89	6.9%
40-49	228	18.0%
50-59	347	27.3%
60-69	310	24.2%
70 and over	258	20.4%
Totals	1272	

Table 5: Gender of Respondents		
<i>Gender</i>	<i>Number of Respondents</i>	<i>Percentage of Total</i>
Male	1103	87.5%
Female	158	12.5%
Total	1261	

Benefits Reported:

Tables 6 through 8 reflect the responses to the questions about how the funding from the SOACDF benefited livestock or crop farming enterprises (Table 6), other ways the funding from the SOACDF benefited agricultural enterprises (Table 7), and how the funding from the SOACDF benefited respondents' lives (Table 8). Over 90% of the respondents indicated at least one benefit from each of these three areas.

The highest number of benefits selected by respondents for livestock and crop farming enterprises were noted for the benefits of: {1} Improved Livestock Fencing (68.5%); {2} New Farm Equipment (52.9%); {3} Improved Livestock Handling Facilities (52.15); and {4} Improved Livestock Feeding Facilities (47.0%)

The highest number of benefits selected by respondents for other ways the funding benefited agricultural enterprises were noted for the benefits of: {1} Reduced Liability (57.3%); {2} Improved Efficiency of Operation (55.8%); {3} Increase Property Values (51.7%); and {4} Daily Farm Chores are Easier (41.9%).

The highest number of benefits selected by respondents for ways the funding benefited their lives were noted for the benefits of: {1} Tobacco Foundation dollars Roll Over in the Local Economy (70.5%); {2} Reduced Stress (46.7%); and {3} Improved Likelihood that My Children and Grandchildren Will Stay on the farm (40.0%)

The fifteen (15) Most Reported Benefits of SOACDF General Agricultural Grants across all benefits are listed in Table 9.

TABLE 6: Number and Per Cent of Respondents Who Reported Benefits to their Livestock or Crop Farming Enterprises due to SOACDF General Agricultural Grants		
<i>Benefit</i>	<i>Number Reporting Benefit</i>	<i>Percent Reporting Benefit</i>
Reporting at Least One (1) Benefit	1272	96.7%
Improved Livestock Genetics	469	35.6%
Improved Livestock Fencing	902	68.5%
Improved Livestock Feeding Facilities	618	47.0%
Improved Livestock Handling Facilities	685	52.1%
Improved Livestock Housing	254	19.3%
New Farm Equipment	696	52.9%
Other Benefits	162	12.3%

TABLE 7: Number and Per Cent of Respondents Who Reported Benefits to their Farming Enterprises due to SOACDF General Agricultural Grants		
<i>Benefit</i>	<i>Number Reporting Benefit</i>	<i>Percent Reporting Benefit</i>
Reporting at Least One (1) Benefit	1247	94.8%
Improved Safety	441	33.5%
Reduced Liability	754	57.3%

TABLE 9: Fifteen (15) Most Reported Benefits of SOACDF General Agricultural Grants – Number and Per Cent of Respondents

<i>Benefit</i>	<i>Number Reporting Benefit</i>	<i>Percent Reporting Benefit</i>
Tobacco Foundation Dollars Roll Over in the Local Economy	928	70.5%
Improved Livestock Fencing	902	68.5%
Reduced Liability	754	57.3%
Improved Efficiency of Operation	734	55.8%
New Farm Equipment	696	52.9%
Improved Livestock Handling Facilities	685	52.1%
Increase Property Values	681	51.7%
Improved Livestock Feeding Facilities	618	47.0%
Reduced Stress	614	46.7%
Daily Farm Chores are Easier	552	41.9%
Improved Likelihood that My Children and Grandchildren Will Stay on the Farm	527	40.0%
Increased Farm/ Business Equity	523	39.7%
Freed Up Operation Funds for Other Improvements	521	39.6%
Improved Overall Management Practices	515	39.1%
Improved Livestock Genetics	469	35.6%

Changes:

Changes in Crop Acres and Livestock Numbers

Respondents were asked to report their Crop acres and Livestock numbers as of January 1, 2001 versus their current Crop acres and Livestock numbers. Statistical tests were run to compare the means of each Crop or Livestock commodity between these two times. Table 10 highlights those means that were statistically significant different. Corn, Soybean, Forage and Other Crop acres all increased. Tobacco acres decreased. The number of head of Cattle and the number of head of Goats also increased over this six year period. Those commodities that did not statistically change were: Wheat acres; Hog numbers; Sheep numbers; and Other Livestock numbers.

TABLE 10: Statistically Significant Changes in Crop and Livestock Production by Respondents between 2001 and 2007

<i>Commodity</i>	<i>2001 Mean</i>	<i>2007 Mean</i>	<i>Change</i>
Corn Acres	29.0	38.1	+9.1
Soybean Acres	53.0	59.7	+6.7
Tobacco	3.7	1.5	-2.2
Forage Acres	63.9	80.8	+16.9
Other Crop Acres	27.0	30.2	+3.2
# Cattle	27.4	38.1	+10.7
# Goats	.7	2.7	+2

Changes in Annual Income and Annual Expenses

Respondents were also asked to estimate how much increase in annual gross income and decrease in annual gross expenses that could be attributed to the SOACDF General Agricultural Grants programs. In Tables 11 & 12, the number of respondents selecting each of the “increase in income” categories and “decrease in expenses” categories is shown each year.

In addition, an “Estimated Annual Increase” in income was calculated by multiplying the mid-point of each category by the number of respondents who chose that category, except for the “Over \$10,000” where \$10,000 was used as the multiplier. A total of \$16,669,500 increase in income over the six years was estimated from 56.4% (response rate) of the grant recipients. Extrapolating this to the entire list of grant recipients, this could be an increase in income of \$29,555,851 over all recipients from 2002 through 2007.

Likewise, an “Estimated Annual Decrease” in expenses was calculated by multiplying the mid-point of each category by the number of respondents who chose that category, except for the “Over \$10,000” where \$10,000 was used as the multiplier. A total of \$9,262,500 decrease in expenses over the six years was estimated from 56.4% (response rate) of the grant recipients. Extrapolating this to the entire list of grant recipients, this could be a decrease in expenses of \$16,422,872 over all recipients from 2002 through 2007.

Adding the estimated Increase in Income and estimated Decrease in Expenses, totals an extra \$45,978,723 was made available to all grant recipients over the six years studied.

Table 12: Number of Grants per Year by Decrease in Expenses – 2002-2007; Grand Total Decrease in Expenses; Average Decrease per Year in Expenses per Grant (Annual Decrease in Expenses estimated by multiplying the mid-point of each category by the number of respondents who chose that category, except for the “Over \$10,000” where \$10,000 was used as the multiplier.)

	2007		2006		2005		2004		2003		2002	
Expense Decrease Category	N	Estimated Annual Decrease	N	Estimated Annual Decrease	N	Estimated Annual Decrease	N	Estimated Annual Decrease	N	Estimated Annual Decrease	N	Estimated Annual Decrease
\$1 to \$1000	141	\$70,500	149	\$74,500	143	\$71,500	125	\$62,500	96	\$48,000	73	\$36,500
\$1001 to \$2000	61	\$91,500	61	\$91,500	60	\$90,000	58	\$87,000	49	\$73,500	38	\$57,000
\$2001 to \$3000	166	\$415,000	166	\$415,000	157	\$392,500	162	\$405,000	136	\$340,000	113	\$282,500
\$3001 to \$4000	38	\$133,000	35	\$122,500	36	\$126,000	36	\$126,000	32	\$112,000	29	\$101,500
\$4001 to \$5000	65	\$292,500	62	\$279,000	68	\$306,000	66	\$297,000	58	\$261,000	48	\$216,000
\$5001 to \$6000	24	\$132,000	24	\$132,000	22	\$121,000	22	\$121,000	18	\$99,000	17	\$93,500
\$6001 to \$7000	21	\$136,500	22	\$143,000	21	\$136,500	18	\$117,000	17	\$110,500	14	\$91,000
\$7001 to \$8000	17	\$127,500	15	\$112,500	14	\$105,000	15	\$112,500	13	\$97,500	13	\$97,500
\$8001 to \$9000	3	\$25,500	4	\$34,000	4	\$34,000	5	\$42,500	4	\$34,000	3	\$25,500
\$9001 to \$10,000	16	\$152,000	16	\$152,000	15	\$142,500	16	\$152,000	13	\$123,500	14	\$133,000
Over \$10,000	12	\$120,000	11	\$110,000	11	\$110,000	12	\$120,000	11	\$110,000	8	\$80,000
Totals	564	\$1,696,000	565	\$1,666,000	551	\$1,635,000	535	\$1,642,500	447	\$1,409,000	370	\$1,214,000
Grand Total Across Six Years:				\$9,262,500								
Grand Total # of Grants:				3032								
Average Decrease Per Year In Expenses Per Grant:				\$3055								

Categories of Reduced Expenses

If respondents answered YES to the question, “Have the general Agricultural grants reduced your farm business/ enterprise expense?”, they were also asked how the General Agricultural Grants reduced those expenses. The results are shown in Table 13. Reduction in machinery repair expenses was selected by 64.4% of the respondents, and 47.1% of the respondents stated that they now hire less custom work. Less feed bills was selected by 38.7% of the respondents, and less veterinary bills selected by 22.1%. When asked to identify other reductions in expenses, 88 respondents selected this option, and 118 responses were given. Responses included such additional categories as less personal labor, less fencing repair costs, less insurance costs, and less fuel expense.

<i>Reduced Expense Category</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Hire Less Custom Work	353	47.1%
Less Machinery Repair Costs	483	64.4%
Less Feed Costs	290	38.7%
Less Veterinary Bills	166	22.1%
Other	88	11.7%

Other Comments about the SOACDF General Agricultural Grants Program by Participants:

A total of 635 people responded to the question near the end of the questionnaire, “16. Please write any other comments that you have about the SOACDF General Agricultural Grants program:”

Many comments were general in nature about how the General Agricultural Grants program was a good program and provided much needed help. Another high number of responses related specific ways in which the funding helped the individual grant recipients. Many other comments were emphatic that the program was essential to individuals and communities.

There were several comments that recommended changes needed in the program. (Complete list of changes needed listed in Appendix C.)

The “Other” category included a variety of comments from a simple “Thank you” to “No comment”, as well as issues that were unique and did not fit in any other category.

A lesser number of responses fell into the categories labeled: Educational program comments; Compliments and Criticism of the administration of the grants program; Local economy improvement; and Passing farm to the next generation.

Table 14. Counts and Themes from Responses to Question, “Please write any other comments that you have about the SOACDF General Agricultural Grants program:”	
Number of Statements	Theme
177	Good program and provided much help
102	Changes needed in the program
101	Specific ways it helped individual farmers
78	Other
62	Essential & worthwhile program
33	Educational program comments
31	Compliment administration of program
29	Local economy has improved
11	Pass farm to the next generation
11	Critical of administration of program
Total number of respondents who wrote a narrative comment for this question was 635	

REPRESENTATIVE EXAMPLES OF COMMENTS FROM Q16:

Good program and provided much help

“This has been one of the most beneficial programs created. It actually helps the farmer.”

Changes needed in the program (Complete list of changes recommended listed in Appendix C.)

“Discontinue diversification program and put that money into general ag program. Be more lenient on what general ag grants can be used for. Require only a 25% matching amount from the recipient.”

Specific ways it helped individual farmers

“These grants have helped make my facility much better & more efficient. It helped me get were I wanted to be in the cattle business without having so much debt.”

Other

“I appreciate the program.”

Essential & worthwhile program

“Until the 1st fencing project, I was not doing any farming, but tobacco. I started with cattle. Improved my pasture, feed lot, hay fields. Got me off my butt. Now I’m proud of my farm thanks to SOACDF.”

Educational program comments

“I have attended classes that I would not have without grant money. My daughter is attending a 4 year college with help from \$3000 grant which really helps us financially.”

Compliment administration of grants program

“2007 was the first time we used this service. We were very pleased with the efficiency, promptness in how our request was handled and payment was made. Everyone was extra friendly and helpful.”

Local economy has improved

“These programs have been a huge benefit not only to us farmers but to the communities where we live by putting dollars right back into agriculture.”

Pass the farm to the next generation

“This program has allowed us to grow our dairy operation and include the second generation into a profitable business.”

Critical of administration of grants program

“Rich got richer. Biggest beneficiary were suppliers. I had to spend dollars to get one. Biased selection process.”

Other Needs That Might Be Addressed by the SOACDF as Stated by General Agricultural Grants Program Participants:

A total of 431 submitted comments in response to this question. As a whole, many of the responses listed specific needs of the individual responding, and were divided into categories of: Buildings/fencing; Tractors/equipment; Fertility; and More Livestock.

A large number of Changes needed in the program were also presented. Several comments encouraged the continuation of the program, and there were also many comments that did not logically fit into any category, and were designated as “Other”. Several people commented on the SOACDF Educational Assistance Program. Other

categories identified, but which had lesser numbers of responses, included Conservation and Educational programs on farming topics.

Table 15. Counts and Themes from Responses to Question, “Other Needs That Might Be Addressed by the SOACDF as Stated by General Agricultural Grants Program Participants:”	
Number of Statements	Theme
91	Specific needs: buildings; fencing; feed pad
79	Changes needed in the program
77	Continue Program
62	Other
56	Specific needs: tractor; equipment;
19	Comments about Educational Assistance Program
18	Conservation programs; Drainage; Water Projects
11	Fertility
9	Educational programs on farming topics
9	More livestock
Total number of respondents who wrote a narrative comment for this question was 431	

REPRESENTATIVE EXAMPLES OF COMMENTS FROM Q17:

Specific needs: buildings; fencing; feed pad

“I would like to build a barn in the future & a grain bin to ad to my grain storage.”

Changes needed in the program (Complete list of changes recommended listed in Appendix C.)

“Make more money available for 19 – 25 yr olds in agriculture on a scale. i.e. small amount at 1st with a review each year to see how their goals have been met and then more as goals are met. If goals not met than find out why.”

Continue Program

“Just continued financial support. This part of state has raised tobacco for 150 years. We are not going to be able to survive on just a few years of funding. It will be trial & error for a few years to try & see what works best for our operation. Keep it going!!”

Other

“Get our money back from the gov.”

“Liniment!”

Specific needs: tractor; equipment

“We need more help with updating our equipment.”

Comments about Educational Assistance Program

“Education grants can live on after the program ends. College grants are the best way to grow Ohio's economy.”

Conservation programs; Drainage; Water Projects

“Conservation projects/repairs to existing conservation practices.”

Fertility

“Lime, fertilizer, pasture improvement.”

“Reseeding money for pasture and hay ground.”

Educational programs on farming topics

“Offer education classes/seminars on topics such as beef production, crop planting/handling, farm safety, etc. Support & develop new businesses & jobs to the local economy.”

More livestock

“Additional grants to add number of cattle head.”

Conclusions:

- [1] The information from the responses summarized in this report is representative of all the General Agricultural Grant Program recipients for the years 2002-2007.
- [2] Almost 90% of General Agricultural Grant recipients were part-time farmers; 87.5% were males; and 71.9% were 50 years old or older
- [3] Corn, Soybean, Forage and Other Crop acres all increased from 2001 to 2007. Tobacco acres decreased over the same years. The number of head of Cattle and the number of head of Goats also increased over this six year period. Those commodities that did not statistically change were: Wheat acres; Hog numbers; Sheep numbers; and Other Livestock numbers.
- [4] 96.7% of the General Agricultural Grant recipients have realized at least one benefit from the program
- [5] Specific benefits of the General Agricultural Grants program, with the percent of grant recipients realizing that benefit in parentheses were: {a} Tobacco Foundation Dollars Roll Over in the Local Economy (70.5%); {b} Improved Livestock Fencing (68.5%); {c} Reduced Liability (57.3%); {d} Improved Efficiency of Operation (55.8%); {e} New Farm Equipment (52.9%); {f} Improved Livestock Handling Facilities (52.1%); and {g} Increase Property Values (51.7%)
- [6] The total increase in income over the six years from General Agricultural Grant recipient respondents was estimated at \$16,669,500, and the reduction in expenses was estimated at \$9,262,500, for a total of \$25,932,000 in funds available to grant recipients that would not have been available without the General Agricultural Grants. Projected to all grant recipients over six years (considering the response rate of 56.4%), this total grows to \$45,978,723. Over the same six year span, \$19,400,000 was awarded in General Agricultural grants. Therefore, for every grant dollar awarded, \$2.37 was realized in increased income and reduced expenses.
- [7] Since 70.5% of grant recipients reported that these dollars rolled over in the local economy, if the dollars roll over only once, then for every grant dollar awarded, \$4.04 was realized in the local economy ($\$2.37 + (.705 \times \$2.37)$).
- [8] The most responses to the "Other Comments" question fell into the categories of: Good program and provided much help; Changes needed in program; Specific ways it helped individual farmers; and Essential & worthwhile program
- [9] There were also many responses to the "Other Needs" question. The majority of the responses listed was specific needs of the individual responding, and were divided into categories of: Buildings/fencing; Tractors/equipment; Fertility; and more Livestock. A large number of Changes Needed in the program was also presented. There were also several comments that encouraged the continuation of the program, and comments on the SOACDF Educational Assistance Program.

APPENDIX A

Ability to Generalize to All General Agricultural Grant Recipients:

The findings of this study would be more powerful if they can be extrapolated to the entire population of six years of SOACDF General Agricultural grantees, rather than just to those who responded. The challenge of doing this is summarized by the phrase, “non-response error”. That is, are the results generated by only the respondents different from those that would be produced by the people who did not respond? There are several ways to address “non-response error” (Miller and Smith, 1983). Four of these methods include: [1] Getting as many responses as possible, i.e. a high response rate; [2] Compare respondents to the population; [3] Compare early to late respondents; and [4] Compare respondents to non-respondents.

High Response Rate: The response rate of this survey was 56.4%. This is a very good response, and is better than most one-contact, mailed surveys, but not good enough to allow the results to be generalized to all General Agricultural grant recipients.

Compare Respondents To The Population: Two factors already known about the population of all grant recipients were county of residence and year grant awarded. The number of respondents was compared to the number of grants awarded in the ten largest participating counties. The ten largest participating counties were used because less than one percent of all grants awarded in the six grant years were from the five counties of Meigs, Morgan, Monroe, Ross and Warren.

Likewise, the number of respondents was compared to the number of grants awarded in the years 2004 through 2007. The results are shown in Tables A-1, A-2 and A-3.

In the county comparisons in Table A-1, the percentages of respondents are very similar to the percentages of grants awarded, which is an indication that the respondents were similar to all grant recipients.

However, in Table A-2 it appears that the respondents were more likely to be those who received grants more recently. This can be seen in Table A-3, which made the same comparisons for only 2004-2007. The number of respondents by year is similar to the number of grants awarded in the last four years.

RESPONDENTS			GRANTS AWARDED		
County	Number	%	County	Number	%
Brown	395	31.4%	Brown	2933	27.5%
Adams	317	25.2%	Adams	2568	24.1%
Gallia	205	16.3%	Gallia	1890	17.1%
Highland	130	10.3%	Highland	1100	10.3%
Clermont	85	6.8%	Lawrence	713	6.7%
Lawrence	59	4.7%	Clermont	643	6.0%
Scioto	47	3.7%	Scioto	515	4.8%
Jackson	10	0.8%	Jackson	148	1.4%
Pike	8	0.6%	Noble	76	0.7%
Noble	3	0.2%	Pike	67	0.6%

Table A-2: Number and Percentage of Respondents Compared to Number and Percentage of Grants Actually Awarded 2002-2007					
RESPONDENTS			GRANTS AWARDED		
Year	Number	%	Year	Number	%
2002	549	11.6%	2002	1931	18.1%
2003	671	14.1%	2003	2070	19.4%
2004	816	17.2%	2004	1843	17.3%
2005	887	18.7%	2005	1631	15.3%
2006	916	19.3%	2006	1633	15.3%
2007	912	19.2%	2007	1545	14.5%
Total	4751		Total	10653	

Table A-3: Number and Percentage of Respondents Compared to Number and Percentage of Grants Actually Awarded 2004-2007					
RESPONDENTS			GRANTS AWARDED		
Year	Number	%	Year	Number	%
2004	816	23.1%	2004	1843	27.7%
2005	887	25.1%	2005	1631	24.5%
2006	916	25.9%	2006	1633	24.5%
2007	912	25.8%	2007	1545	23.2%
Total	3531		Total	6652	

Compare Early To Late Respondents: Respondents were tracked by the date of response. The first 100 respondents were compared to the last 100 respondents on all variables through March 25. T-tests were employed on the scale variables, and chi-square test on all nominal variables. There were no statistically significant differences on any of these variables between early and late respondents at the .05 level.

Compare Respondents To Non-Respondents: In an attempt to investigate the non-respondents, 100 addresses of General Agricultural grant recipients were randomly selected from the non-respondents as of March 17th, and a second mailing with modified cover letter, questionnaire, and pre-addressed return envelope with postage affixed was mailed to them. Through April 8, 2008, twenty-six were returned. The response from this group was considered to be an indication of the larger group of non-respondents. T-tests were employed on the scale variables, and chi-square test on all nominal variables. There were no statistically significant differences on any of these variables between respondents and non-respondents at the .05 level.

Reference:

Miller, L. E., & Smith, K. L. (1983). Handling non-response issues. Journal of Extension [Online], 21(5). Available at: <http://www.joe.org/joe/1983september/83-5-a7.pdf> (pdf)

APPENDIX B

Questionnaire Content:

1. Description of your **CURRENT FARMING ENTERPRISE** in 2007: *(Please insert numbers.)*

<i>Crops:</i>	Corn Acres	_____
	Soybean Acres	_____
	Wheat Acres	_____
	Tobacco Acres	_____
	Forage (hay & pasture)	_____
	All other Acres	_____
 <i>Livestock:</i>		
	Cattle – number of head	_____
	Hogs – number of head	_____
	Sheep – number of head	_____
	Goats – number of head	_____
	Other – number of head	_____

2. Description of your **FARMING ENTERPRISE ON JANUARY 1, 2001:** *(Please insert numbers.)*

<i>Crops:</i>	Corn Acres	_____
	Soybean Acres	_____
	Wheat Acres	_____
	Tobacco Acres	_____
	Forage (hay & pasture)	_____
	All other Acres	_____
 <i>Livestock:</i>		
	Cattle – number of head	_____
	Hogs – number of head	_____
	Sheep – number of head	_____
	Goats – number of head	_____
	Other – number of head	_____

3. How has the funding from the SOACDF benefited **YOUR LIVESTOCK OR CROP FARMING** enterprise? *(Check only those that apply to YOUR livestock or crop farming enterprise.)*

- No benefit
- Improved livestock genetics
- Improved livestock fencing
- Improve livestock feeding facilities/ feeding equipment
- Improved livestock handling facilities
- Improved livestock housing/ barns
- Newer farm field equipment
- Other, Please specify : _____

4. In what other ways has the funding from the SOACDF benefited YOUR AGRICULTURAL ENTERPRISE? (Check only those that apply to YOUR agricultural enterprise.)

- No benefit
- Improved safety
- Reduced liability (e.g. because of livestock getting out)
- Improved overall management practices
- Better record keeping
- Improved efficiency of operation
- Less dependence on others for custom equipment
- Daily farm chores are easier
- Reduced number of farm operation employees
- Provided incentive to make a long term business plan
- Thought about new ideas that would not have been thought about otherwise
- Accelerated getting bigger and better; Helped reach goals faster
- Freed up operation funds to make other improvements
- Farm is now more competitive with farms in other areas
- Increased farm/business equity
- Increased property values
- Other, Please specify: _____

5. How has the funding from the SOACDF otherwise benefited YOUR LIFE? (Check all that apply.)

- No benefit
- Tobacco foundation dollars roll over in the local economy
- Reduced stress
- As an older tobacco farmer I can see that tobacco growing was beneficial for the next generation
- Improved the likelihood that my children and grandchildren will stay on the farm
- Other, Please specify: _____

6. Have the General Agricultural Grants improved your farm/ business enterprise gross income?

YES NO → (If NO, skip to Question 8)

7. If you responded YES to the previous question, please estimate the ANNUAL dollar amount of your farm/ business enterprise GROSS INCOME INCREASE THAT YOU CAN ATTRIBUTE TO THE GENERAL AGRICULTURAL GRANTS: (Please check only one.)

- \$1 to \$1000 \$1001 to \$2000
- \$2001 to \$3000 \$3001 to \$4000
- \$4001 to \$5000 \$5001 to \$6000
- \$6001 to \$7000 \$7001 to \$8000
- \$8001 to \$9000 \$9001 to \$10,000
- If Over \$10,000, Please estimate \$ _____

8. Have the General Agricultural Grants reduced your farm business enterprise expenses?

YES NO → (If NO, skip to Question 11)

9. If you answered YES to the previous question, how have the General Agricultural Grants reduced your farm/ business expenses? (Check all that apply.)

- Hire less custom work
- Less machinery repair costs
- Less feed costs
- Less veterinary bills
- Other, Please specify: _____

10. If you responded YES to Question #8, please estimate the ANNUAL dollar amount of your farm/ business enterprise DECREASE IN EXPENSES THAT YOU CAN ATTRIBUTE TO THE GENERAL AGRICULTURAL GRANTS: (Please check only one.)

- \$1 to \$1000 \$1001 to \$2000
- \$2001 to \$3000 \$3001 to \$4000
- \$4001 to \$5000 \$5001 to \$6000
- \$6001 to \$7000 \$7001 to \$8000
- \$8001 to \$9000 \$9001 to \$10,000
- If Over \$10,000, Please estimate \$ _____

11. County where your farming/business operation is located: (Please circle one.)

- | | | | |
|----------|----------|--------|--------|
| Adams | Gallia | Meigs | Ross |
| Brown | Highland | Monroe | Scioto |
| Clermont | Jackson | Noble | Warren |
| Clinton | Lawrence | Pike | |

12. Year(s) in which you received a SOACDF General Agricultural Grant: (Please circle all that apply.)

- 2002 2003 2004 2005 2006 2007

13. What is the approximate percentage of your total income from your farm: (Please check only one.)

- 0-25% 51-75% 100%
- 26-50% 75-99%

14. Your Age Range: (Please check only one.)

- Less than 20 years old
- 20-29 years
- 30-39 years
- 40-49 years
- 50-59 years
- 60-69 years
- 70 and Over

15. Are you? (*Circle.*) Male Female

16. Please write any other comments that you have about the SOACDF General Agricultural Grants program:

17. What other needs do you have that might be addressed by the SOACDF?

THANK YOU!!

Please Return to: SOACDF
 PO Box 47
 Hillsboro, OH 45133

APPENDIX C

Changes Needed in the Program – From Analysis of Q16:

- 1 That the SOACDF money be divided among all base holders and not to those who aggressively apply
- 2 I think a good farmer should be able to make his decision on an investment than buying new paint.
- 3 For those employed full time off farmer, need timeline to included summer to get projects done (fencing).
- 4 Would be nice if we could get the money and not have to spend money we might not have. Its our money.
- 5 Discontinue diversification program and put that money into general ag program. Be more lenient on what general ag grants can be used for. Require only a 25% matching amount from the recipient.
- 6 Require smaller matching percent from participant. SOACDF 75% Participant 25%
- 7 Reduce recipient matching money to 25% of total cost. SOACDF 75%
- 8 Give the people that have not got the diversification grant a chance to get it.
- 9 Only benefits people who have some money anyway if could have received by any farmer the funds could have benefited in many ways instead of most having to go into debt more than some should have went and could afford!
- 10 Keep the small grants to \$2000. I appreciate the funds I have received. All projects have been used to their maximum benefit.
- 11 Need note as when you are giving a grant and dates.
- 12 The only suggestion I have is it would be nice to have some funds for the younger generation 20 & 40 yrs old or so most of the older generation that have the points don't want to do anything.
- 13 I think they should let us know programs they have. That would help.
- 14 Funds should be kept for those who literally lived or died according to their tobacco production rather than being ciphoned off for other state-funded issues.
- 15 Would like to have a pole type barn for equipment and hay & feed storage but did not have enough poundage to reach the needed # of pounds to qualify for the larger amount, where my neighbor with larger poundage seemed to qualify each year. My grandfather would have been very disappointed as he came to the farm in 1905, raised a family of 13 children. Tobacco crop the main source of income. The farm will stay in the family for them to enjoy as I have.
- 16 If field rep approves a plan, do not make it overturned by the head man
- 17 A better way of making the business plan for the small farmer so they can get more help on larger scale projects where other's have had multi project approved.
- 18 It would be beneficial if allocated monies could be used for farm border fencing instead of interior fencing only.
- 19 The money that went to the local government (county) was not properly/fairly distributed. Large amounts went to businesses not to farmers or businesses hiring farmers.
- 20 I believe once a producer has received the Ag Diversification grant money, they should not be able to receive it again. There are plenty of other producers that raised under the 10,000 lbs that it should go to others. The fat cats are getting fatter.
- 21 I've only got the small grants. I don't have the money to put out on the 50-50 deal. Only the few big boys can afford and be in the inside click to receive the big moneys. I need cattle feed barn, feed storage equipment. But I can't afford the investment to build. I just do make ends meet now.
- 22 The grants should be exclusively for full time farmers!

- 23 We should receive vouchers to get lime, fertilizer, seeds, fencing for the farms instead of having to pay for it upfront. There are times we can't afford to get the lime & fertilizer without the upfront monies.
- 24 Was a very unfair program. The correct people got most of the money was not handled well at all.
- 25 I think the grant monies should apply to any tillage and grain handling equipment. Even tractors should be covered.
- 26 Instead of using the point system for the large grants, give the ones that didn't make enough points first priority the following year.
- 27 Increase funding to each participant i.e. old ex tobacco farmers.
- 28 I think there should be more money available to improve fencing so we can stay competitive as we become older on fixed or limited income and material costs soar.
- 29 I would try to find a way to get the little tobacco grower a better chance of receiving some of the funds before giving the big guy a 2nd & 3rd piece of the pie!!
- 30 I feel the new restrictions on purchases new or almost new equipment is too cost prohibitive for many farmers that can't afford new stuff.
- 31 I buy & resell real estate. I haven't found where you can help me in this area. This is now my main source of income.
- 32 You do not consider used equipment unless it is oked before bought.
- 33 I would like to see the funding return to previous levels. With the downturn in the economy our profit margins are dropping due to input costs.
- 34 Different grading system on a new project or add to a existing operation.
- 35 More money.
- 36 The General Ag grants have been very beneficial to my farm business. However the money should have been equally distributed to all tobacco farmers instead of only a few.
- 37 Increase grant back to \$2000.
- 38 Both grants program put together so more than the \$1500 could be distributed for 50% match.
- 39 I think it should stay at \$2000.
- 40 Money goes to the big operations and this small farmer can't compete. Receives unfair price for everything you have to take to market & expenses eat up any would be profit.
- 41 The process for the grants is crap. Some farmers have gotten it twice & others 0. The whole program should be scrapped & the small funding increased.
- 42 Need to provide more money for small grower.
- 43 The same farmers receive the big diversified program money. A small farmer can not get enough points to qualify. This leaves a lot of people out of the program. You keep increasing the points needed so these farmers will never make it. It will continue to go to the same people.
- 44 Poundage of tobacco should always be a factor in scoring. People who don't own a farm should not b3e allowed to participate.
- 45 I have always felt there was an unfair advantage to livestock people on the funds available.
- 46 Grants might in the future be used by SOACDF to secure expert marketing personnel. My personal experience tells me that most farmers have no difficulty producing their "crops" but have immense difficulty selling or marketing their produce at fair prices. I could raise 10 times the produce on my farm, but have decided not to bother because of marketing difficulty. The need or demand is there, but my marketing should be handled by an expert which at my level of production is not cost effective.
- 47 Farm too small to have benefit from the SOACDF program.
- 48 I think it is a good program. I would like to see it continue. It would be nice to see dollar amount raised to 2000 to 5000 so a larger piece of equipment could be purchased.

49 I would like a building used for shop, but the sign up is August, and then you don't know if you get it til late October. The timing is too late as bad weather has set in, but you have to have it done by May. It seems the larger farms have been more likely to receive aid. I know they raised more tobacco.

50 Since I do not have a mass amount of livestock I use the grants to better my crops and equipment. (lime, hay & grain equipment) However, the strict guidelines on what equipment and the age of the equipment I can purchase is getting limited. I feel that I should be able to purchase any equipment that would better and improve my farming practices. Equipment does not have to be 10 years old or have a new paint job just to be a good, solid piece of equipment.

51 The farmer if he is to be able to help his animals than we need help to buy fertilizer which is almost impossible to buy enough to produce the hay to feed you.

52 There are some people that have not received grants that deserve them.

53 There needs to be wiser distribution of funds. People participate that were marginally involved. People that depend on tobacco as a major source of income are denied.

54 Full time farmers should take first priority.

55 I just have one. Why didn't the total dollar amount get divide equal between tobacco producers? Instead you give it to people that never raised tobacco and most of the time they got newer equipment before we did.

56 People that have received the larger grant (\$40,000) should not be eligible for a longer period of time then those who have been turned down.

57 It seems funny to me that 95% of the things you get money for involve livestock.

58 Program selection ought to be only on items with a service lifetime expectancy of 10 years or more. Farmer will take advantage of whatever foundation offers with great appreciation. Consider impacting other areas of need that have not been met.

59 I would like to see more money available to us. Sometimes it's hard to come up with our share so maybe that could be reduced.

60 I was thrilled to acquire the grant but the specifications may make it unavailable for my use.

61 I was told one year that if I did not do something big, that I should just pay for it myself. (example - wanted to put barbed wire between high tensile strands of fence)

62 These grants have been very beneficial. I personally would like to see the diversification grant dropped and those dollars used to make the general grants larger. I believe efforts should be directed toward savings these grants over other programs.

63 I was disappointed to see the dollar amount reduced from the previous \$2000.00 to the current \$1500.00

64 The programs needed to be a year long so we could get the work done in the summer instead of the winter.

65 \$1500 not inof money

66 The amount of available monies should be divided by pounds of tobacco raised by individuals base (tobacco base poundage) without "hoops" to jump thru. Also most definitely should not have been give to those who did not raise tobacco.

67 The money should have been paid directly to tobacco farmers. Without all the political catches?

68 It would have been nice if it could have stayed the same as years in past instead of less. Since the governor decided to use it for something else.

69 I find it very difficult to understand how certain individuals get approved for diversification every time they are eligible and others can never qualify for the program! I can name names if you want to know!

70 The design of this grant programs resulted in some farmers receiving larger diversified funds multiple times. The way the grant was designed targeted farmers who could most afford the matching funds, in essence rewarding only farmers who had already established income or

equity. While the purpose of this grant was to help farmers transition out of tobacco production, some of those farmers not only stayed in the business of tobacco production but, with the help of additional funds, actually increased their tobacco production. So, as the majority of farmers got out of the tobacco business, the void was filled by a handful of farmers, many of them recipients of diversified funds. In addition, while diversified grant amounts were held steady, the smaller general agriculture grants dropped from \$2000 to \$1500. It seems the funding benefited a few well established farmers more than the less established majority, who may have needed the help more to keep their farms.

71 Need to know how and when they are available to me not my next door farm

72 Very near impossible even with questioning of desired direction to apply grant for small farms to access the grant. (unclear what you expect in a business plan)

73 Don't try to decide so much on how I spend my money

74 The program only benefits the bigger producer. Nothing helps the small farm. The program was to help all farmers. No so in Adams County. A lot of political benefits.

75 The number of years a family has produced tobacco should be taken more in consideration for grants over those who have produced large amounts for only a very few years.

76 We don't have enough money to put up front to use these programs to our benefit. Poor people lose out.

77 Debt to equity needs to be addressed by making split at least 75-25. Would get more yes answers

78 Don't cut the 4000.00 if you must make cuts the 80,000 should be cut

79 Would like to have additional grants for farm equipment and fencing.

80 The small tobacco farmer is being left out of the qualification for the larger grants. I feel that should be looked at closer, even if it means cutting the amount money back. Why the same people get grants all the time.

81 To spread the around more, I would like to see more money in the general agr grants and less in diversification!

82 The point system doesn't help small farmers who are in need.

83 Diversification should be fair. Most of the ones who get it still raise tobacco. I thought this was for those who quit and were trying to get money to benefit their farms in other ways.

84 I wish the small grant would stay at \$2000 instead of dropping to \$1500. I think it helps the small producers get small equipment instead of filling out the big program.

85 I personally think the money could have been distributed with out waste of a lot of fence being built on farms that don't even have livestock

86 Still miss the tobacco income. That money you could spend or save as you needed for farm needs. These programs in Ohio dictated how the money would be spend unlike other states that got to choose. Our goal in purchasing tobacco poundage was for mostly college tuition for my daughter. Lost most of that.

87 Quota owners did not share equally in the amounts of grants of the same project as producers.

88 Would like to see the smaller grants \$750-\$1500 increased, not cut. 1500 doesn't buy much these days.

89 Could us a portable generator to pump water to cows in back fields but the ones you allow are too expensive.

90 A smaller scale grant for buying farm tools for hay other items. Better communication for grant. Send letter to each farmer.

91 All money should be distributed equally. I did not raise tobacco because I saw it had no future when I purchased my farm in 1996. Being farsighted cost me lots of grant money that I could have used to rapidly replace money lost from my former lease payments.

92 Small farmers need as much money as the large corp. do!

- 93 Cut large grant to 20 or 30 thousand. So it's available to more farmers. People who have had it twice should not be eligible.
- 94 The big grants seem to be awarded to favorites every year. Especially the first year!
- 95 Program should include grandchildren due to average age of tobacco farmers c/c education grants.
- 96 If you give somebody 2000.00 we should not have to spent 4000.00 to get it.
- 97 I would like to see the amounts of the grants returned to \$4000.00. That was enough to make a good project.
- 98 Am thankful for everything I got very much so. But the amounts for larger or big farms was so much more because they already had so much more.
- 99 The program has been beneficial to our farm. I wish the dollar amount had not been reduced for 2007. The grant program has made some labor reducing tools more affordable.
- 100 I believe they would have been better in direct payments. Each tobacco farmer would have benefited much better. It would be a more fair way for funds to be spent. Bills can be shown for what we spent.
- 101 People that only raised an acre of tobacco get grants when people who raised 4 or 20 acres for 20 years and counted on that money to pay bills can not get the grant because their business plan was real. Instead of a outlandish fake plan.
- 102 Good program for farmers that had money for matching programs - bad for those farmers that didn't have money to match. A small tobacco farmer should benefit equally by percent size as a large farmer that has more equity.

Changes Needed in the Program – From Analysis of Q17:

- 1 I think they should divide the money up among the past quota holders and put these penny pinchers out of a job.
- 2 Let us the \$2000 grant money to make minor improvements to existing structures. Not everyone wants to do a business plan. Improvements on structures could be painting barns, adding sheds, small hoop buildings, etc.
- 3 More lenient toward letting me decide how to spend money.
- 4 Make it easier to qualify for diversification program.
- 5 Be nice if you could just allot us the \$1500 and let us show proof of how we spent money instead of having to spend \$3000 up front to receive \$1500. And could get lots of good used merchandise that is just as worthy as brand new & could use & improve many things instead of just one. Some farmers have had good profitable years but in the last 20 most farmers have quit or had to do something else for finance but they don't have much money!!! Farmers break their backs to carry most of this lazy country.
- 6 Would like to purchase goat semen to improve our genetics, but it is not approved for goats, just cattle. Would like to see this approved before May so I could use my 2007 grant money specifically on semen.
- 7 Make more money available for 19 – 25 yr olds in agriculture on a scale. i.e. small amount at 1st with a review each year to see how their goals have been met and then more as goals are met. If goals not met than find out why.
- 8 Longer time frames to complete projects when the weather does not cooperate.
- 9 Reduce the diversification amount and spread it out so more people can get it. Everyone with a good business plan should get it once before other get it for the 2nd time.
- 10 More flexibility in small equipment – tractors, tillers, etc to be cost shared. Small farmers have to pay more per horse power for small tractors and equipment than larger horse power tractors, etc. Small fruit production does not lend itself to larger equipment. The worry/concern of the governing body of SOACDF that the tractor, mower, small equipment will be used for other than “production” is overblown for small producers.

- 11 That maybe they could give more money on the small programs.
- 12 I is hard to get fencing up in the months allowed. May, June, July & August would be great months to work on fencing.
- 13 I think the genetic barriers are too stringent. Please include composite cattle in the program.
- 14 Increase the general grants to \$2000 like the used to be in years past.
- 15 Why not make it possible for the little guy (family farmer) pay his land taxes. Keep his farm working and have a decent living. Without having to have a lawyer do all the paperwork needed to receive a grant?
- 16 The grants should be open to any agricultural purchases that Chris Grooms would approve by phone. The reason is that with farming, every year is different.
- 17 Give us vouchers for what we need for the farms instead of having to have us buy what we can't afford. You can make out vouchers to us and the company that we deal with that why it still goes to the farm use and not just pocket money.
- 18 Would like to see the amount of money increase back to at least \$2000 or more if possible.
- 19 Give us help with the business plan and less emphasis on the amount of tobacco base that we had.
- 20 I lost my grant last year because I sent my receipts to SOACDF for a registered heifer but didn't send registration papers to someone else required. This cost me \$2400 for cow & \$1000 lost grant. (picky)
- 21 Continue to monitor abuses! Fences, barns, etc. should bear a sign for the public to see that part of the funding for this improvement was through SOACDF. Get legislators and governor out to "small" family farms to see the difference you have made. They see enough mega farm!!
- 22 As a small livestock farmer we need a pipeline to purchase our inputs in volume to receive discounts. Fuel, feeds, anything pertaining to daily operations we don't have access to grain byproducts or bio-diesel that others have. I would like to see 500 or 1000 gallon fuel tanks added to your list of materials that can be purchased on cost share.
- 23 Need to consider a percentage of grant could be used for farm pickup truck. 25% would help.
- 24 More money for ones involved in farming and less for grants to big business enterprises.
- 25 Grants should cover 70-90% of total expenses rather than only 50%.
- 26 Change rules of agricultural diversification grant so that smaller producers with less tobacco quota has an opportunity to qualify for the grant. I would like to diversify same as the producer who has 9000 lbs quota. I own a farm and have raised tobacco all my life until of recent years.
- 27 Would like to make own decision concerning age/type of equipment I wish to purchase.
- 28 Need a bigger grant to buy and sell used farm equipment. Because want to be in business for myself. Because.
- 29 Help for the family farm, not the factory farms.
- 30 I could not survive on the money my small farm produces. Like most other people I have to depend on my business for most of my income. Since I do live on the farm where the grant money is used a higher percentage for the land owner would help considerably.
- 31 Look at how diversification program can help the small tobacco farmer. My son had raised tobacco since the age of 15 but did not raise enough to qualify.
- 32 If grants would be available to repairing fences.
- 33 Money should be set aside to aid the farmer in repaying their student loans from college thereby learning another valuable profession.

34 Most of our farm hay is on top of the hill from our house. The road is getting in bad shape. We cannot afford to fix it so we just keep throwing rocks on it which is not a solution. It would help if we could get help to fix it.

35 It would be nice if you had some program that would help our grandchildren go to college. By the time families have the ability to buy a farm and get it working your children are past college age.

36 I need some financial help for labor for cleaning (cutting back growth, saplings, small tress, wild berry bushes, etc.) I don't know whether this is approved by your program or not. If I could get this done I could fence the other side of this same small field. Thank you!

37 Cost share for attachments such as front end loader for farm tractors, tracks for skid loaders.

38 Have large grants be graded by an outside agency, not by the "good ole boys" who give it to their buddies.

39 If it continues to make selection by lottery concept so all people have equal chance to benefit.

40 Low interest farm improvement loans?

41 Make grandchildren eligible for education grants.

42 More grants for small farms.

43 General agricultural grant for NEW barn construction

44 Some of the programs should be expanded on what would be eligible for reimbursement.

45 I am a quota owner and the discrepancies money wise between the quota owner and the quota grower are unfair. Each party should receive the same amount of allocations to keep the quota owners positively involved and willing participants.

46 Farming operations differ each year - it would be good to broaden availability of grants to include all agricultural products.

47 More different information by regular mail or emails.

48 I could have saved the program so much money & trouble by just giving the producers there fair shares. You need to start going back and checking projects because you will find they are not getting used for what they were built for. It seems like the same people kept getting money. I try to be honest about these projects. But I see how things are done the more you lie the more you get. I hate things done like this. You've got people that bought equipment & didn't even need it then turn around and seal it. You better start checking.

49 The percentage of reimbursement rate should be increased to 75% to over come the income tax liability.

50 The smaller the farmer the less we get. It seems to me that some farmers get more grants than others.

51 I feel the SOACDF has done a very good job in creating the project that are a real help to my operation. The only need I see is that the \$1500.00 limit is not enough. Many projects on my farm will greatly exceed \$3000 (\$1500 SOACDF money). I would like to see a \$5000 grant. This amount would be 1/2 of a \$10,000 project. Example: I have a silo unloader that has been rebuilt 3 times. It's time for replacement. Cost \$8900

52 I don't agree at all with the way monies were used. It was all supposed to be "tobacco" buyout, tobacco only. Why should it have been given to anyone else other than tobacco growers?!?!?! Very frustrating. I really needed a combine but was refused the \$40.00 I requested even tho I've raised tobacco since I was 9 years old. I'm now 70. (I was refused because one year I allowed my teenage son to sell some tobacco in his name for all his help raising it. I was told that caused me to not have enough poundage.)

53 The prospect of being able to purchase quality used equipment. Larger farmers have an advantage over the smaller operators. Overall these farms will receive more funds. If you want to make it fair, open it up more for smaller operators who cannot afford to split a \$60,000 tractor.

- 54 Funds should be available to all farms, not just the farmer. As it is some farms are not eligible because their owner has another farm. Example: a husband and wife own farm A. Parent dies and leaves 1/2 farm B to wife. Farm B becomes ineligible as both husband and wife can't apply. Farm B also had a tobacco base and should be entitled to funds for improvements or diversifications. Fence building would be a great improvement.
- 55 Increase their funds to \$2000 up from \$1500 and have both husband and wives allowance for their grants. With increasing costs and decreasing grants they will not achieve as much as they have previously.
- 56 This program needs to be able to be passed on in case someone passes away to the oper. Of farm not die with the parent.
- 57 For me if the grants were granted in the spring they would be easier to complete due to weather.
- 58 Help out small farms. In the diversification program not just the special farms or certain people. Benefit all not some people. Need big help in Adams County.
- 59 Sometimes its hard to come up with the total amount of money. If they could issue vouchers on some practices so you could get paid without having to find so much money.
- 60 Change the political atmosphere for the diversification projects so only the select few don't receive them. Should be split up equally for all to receive each year even if the amount is lowered.
- 61 I would like to see the percentage go back to 2/3 as well the guidelines for condition of used equipment be less strict. I have recently purchased a corn binder, which is a 40 year old piece of equipment but is in VERY good condition. The inspector came to look at it but his supervisor said no due to the fact that it has steel wheels. This piece of equipment is used to make fodder shocks for fall decorations which I have been selling for a good profit as much profit as in tobacco! Thank you for your past present and hopefully future grants.
- 62 The program needs to include ATV's like John Deere gator.
- 63 Owners equal to growers capital outlay as owners vs renters
- 64 I think there is a need for available low interest loans for farmers so more can participate in the SOACDF programs.
- 65 I believe that the same ones should not get diversification every time they are able to. They improved their farms once. Why 3 times. For more comments, I have many please call 937-377-2123.
- 66 Better knowledge of grant availability.
- 67 (idea) Children receive the \$3000 tuition payment - can that go to their income so they pay the taxes.
- 68 I think the diversification could be a little more fair to people like myself! If you raised a lot of tobacco you are a shoe in for the grant. I myself didn't and it has hurt me every time!
- 69 I would like to see the ag diversification project changed to only new applicants that have not been approved in the past 6 years. Spread the funds to assist others.
- 70 Assistance in developing business plans for large purchases and assist adult children who want to continue the family farm operation when senior adults have to enter semi-retirement.
- 71 Help smaller farmer with larger amounts in future. Cut back on bigger grants they only benefit larger farmers and that makes it harder on smaller ones.
- 72 I would like to be able to be notified what my benefits are and have fair consideration, just like the big farmer's.
- 73 With the price of steel going up for fence supplies, I feel the amount should increase if funds are available.
- 74 It would help if they could make some of the do capital improvement without a major farm plan.
- 75 Why have fence building programs and not include post drivers?
- 76 Why don't the SOACDF grant pay for a post driver or post hole digger?

77 There doesn't seem to be a lot of transparency in the process - Who receives the grants, why & why if you don't get the grant where did you fall short. I would like to see some follow up to help people (myself included) to have a successful application.

78 I think it does not take care of the small farmer as well as it should as far as equipment such as sprayers, seeders, cutter, baler and other equipment. Caters to large in size of equipment. Should include other livestock such as our venison meat operation. Thank you.

79 Having forms for acceptance grants send to the farmer each year.