
Tasha Monique Hargrove

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UMI

by

Tasha Monique Hargrove

A dissertation submitted to the graduate faculty
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Major: Agricultural Education (Agricultural Extension Education)

Program of Study Committee:
B. Lynn Jones, Major Professor
   Robert Martin
   Wade Miller
   Emily Moore
   Betty Wells
   Timothy Borich

Iowa State University
Ames, Iowa
2002
This is to certify that the doctoral dissertation of

Tasha Monique Hargrove

has met the dissertation requirements of Iowa State University

Signature was redacted for privacy.

Major Professor

Signature was redacted for privacy.

For the Major Program
To:

My parents, Mr. and Mrs. Henry and Elizabeth Hargrove, for their love, understanding, and all the sacrifices that they have made so that I could make my dreams become a reality.

My brothers, nephews, grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins, and friends for their words of encouragement and the little things that they have done in order that I could accomplish my goals.

My significant other, Ronald Slaughter, for your love, trust, and prayers.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LIST OF FIGURES</th>
<th>vi</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LIST OF TABLES</td>
<td>vii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</td>
<td>viii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABSTRACT</td>
<td>ix</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## CHAPTER I. INTRODUCTION
- Background 1
- Problem Statement 15
- Purpose of the Study 18
- Research Questions 19
- Justification of the Study 20
- Organization of the Study 21
- Definition of Terms 21

## CHAPTER II. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE
- Historical Review of the Role of Blacks in U.S. Agriculture From 1619-1880 24
- Historical Review of Agricultural Extension Education and 1890 Land-Grant Institutions 30
- Discrimination in U.S. Agriculture 37
- The Program Planning Process: The Case of Black Farmers 44
- Understanding the Targeted Audience: Profile of Black Farmers 46
- Understanding the Learning Process for Black Farmers 52
- Evaluating the Program 57
- Summary 62

## CHAPTER III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY
- Qualitative Research Methodology 65
- Pilot Study 67
- Selection of Cases 69
- Data Collection Techniques 73
- Data Analysis 76
- Strategies to Enhance Design Validity & Trustworthiness 79

## CHAPTER IV. PROFILES OF THE SMALL FARM PROJECTS
- Federation of Southern Cooperatives/Land Assistance Fund 82
- Tuskegee University 85
- Fort Valley State University 88
- South Carolina State University 91
- Alcorn State University 93
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>V</td>
<td>Interpretations of Findings</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What Specific Activities Were the 2501 Projects Engaged In?</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To What Extent was the 2501 Program Implemented as Planned &amp;</td>
<td>113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What Factors May Have Impeded Its Successful Implementation?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What was the Relationship Between the Small Farm Projects &amp;</td>
<td>122</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Their Major Stakeholders?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Who Benefits from the 2501 Program and In What Ways?</td>
<td>131</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What Was the Impact of the 2501 Projects During the Time Period of</td>
<td>133</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1994-2001?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What Does the Future Hold For the 2501 Program?</td>
<td>138</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>142</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VI</td>
<td>Summary, Conclusions, and Recommendations</td>
<td>144</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>144</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Conclusions</td>
<td>148</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Recommendations</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Implications for Agricultural Extension Education</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Targeting African American Farmers</td>
<td>157</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix</td>
<td>Introductory Letter to Small Farm Projects</td>
<td>159</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Interview Guide</td>
<td>162</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Information Statement</td>
<td>165</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Human Subjects Approval</td>
<td>167</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>References Cited</td>
<td>169</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1. Structure of the 2501 Program 14
# LIST OF TABLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Table 1</td>
<td>U. S. Farms Operated by Blacks and Whites 1900-1997</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 2</td>
<td>2501 Small Farm Projects 1994-2000</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 4</td>
<td>Black Farm Acres 1982-1997 (Southeastern States)</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 5</td>
<td>Black Farmers, 1982-1997 by State (Southern)</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 6</td>
<td>Federation of Southern Cooperatives/Land Assistance Fund Targeted Area</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 7</td>
<td>2501 Process Flow Diagram</td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 8</td>
<td>2501 Projects FY 2001</td>
<td>141</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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First and foremost, I would like to thank the Almighty God for the strength and energy to accomplish the goals that I have completed so far in my life. My sincere gratitude is extended to my major academic advisor Dr. B. Lynn Jones for understanding and visualizing my research study, even before I could clearly articulate what that vision was. I would also like to extend my sincere appreciation to my mentor and committee member Dr. Emily Moore for her words of wisdom and guidance throughout this journey. In addition, my sincere gratitude is also extended to Drs. Robert Martin, Wade Miller, Timothy Borich, and Betty Wells for assisting in the final completion of this research study. I would also like to acknowledge the staff at each of the small farm projects at Fort Valley State University, Tuskegee University, Alcorn State University, Lincoln University, Federation of Southern Cooperatives/Land Assistance Fund, and South Carolina State University for taking me under their wings and providing me with a realistic view of the 2501 program. Finally, my sincere appreciation and admiration to my friends and colleagues to numerous to mention, but much too important to leave out.
ABSTRACT

The overall purpose of this study was to provide a case study analysis of the implementation process of the Small Farmers Outreach Training and Technical Assistance (2501) Program with implications for African American farmers. The 2501 Program is an agricultural educational program that was designed to reverse or slow the decline of socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers.

In 1994, twenty-seven small farm projects were established as a result of the 2501 Program. Institutions including South Carolina State University, Fort Valley State University, Tuskegee University, Alcorn State University, Lincoln University, and the Federation of Southern Cooperatives/Land Assistance Fund received five-year grants to provide technical and outreach assistance to African American farmers. These six small farm projects were the focus of this study. The experiences of the participating six small farm projects were used to provide evidence in assisting the researcher to: realistically capture the internal dynamics of the 2501 Program at the project level, (2) examine the implementation process of the 2501 Program and identify obstacles that impeded the successful implementation of the 2501 Program, and (3) determine if the 2501 Program has achieved its overall objective.

The data for this study were collected using the case study qualitative methodological approach. Interviews, participant observations, and document analysis were used to collect the data.

The findings of this study revealed that the 2501 Program; in particular the six participating small farm projects, were effective in ensuring the long-term
sustainability of African American farmers. However, there were several factors that severely restricted the successful implementation of the overall 2501 Program. Specifically, the main factor identified was the provision of guaranteed and timely funding to the small farm projects working at the grassroots level. Funding at the national level to the small farm projects was sporadic and uncertain which affected the ability of the small farm projects to successfully implement their programs. In addition, the findings also revealed that the six participating projects were actively engaged in recruiting participants, disseminating information, assisting farmers in obtaining loans, establishing cooperatives, and introducing farmers to alternative enterprises.
CHAPTER I. INTRODUCTION

Background

The story of the African American farmer has been documented in numerous articles, books, and through the oral testimonies of those who have lived and witnessed the struggle. A review of the literature indicates that this particular story is often characterized by episodes of racism and discrimination, the rapid exodus of thousands of African Americans from agriculture, the loss of thousands of acres of Black-owned farmland, and the changing structure of agriculture and its impact on the African American farmer. A closer examination of the literature reveals that there is another story that is often told. This story focuses on the promise of a better tomorrow and the hope for a future that takes into consideration the historical past and uses these experiences to build a strong and solid foundation for the future.

The rich history of African Americans outlines a legacy that is rooted deep within the agrarian community. Originally brought to the United States as slaves, African Americans have participated in farming for more than 300 years (Schor, 1992; Wimberley, Morris, & Bachtel, 1992; Zabawa, 1989). A review of the Census of Agriculture indicates that thousands of African Americans have abandoned farming. African American have abandoned farming at a much greater rate than their White counterparts (see Table 1). This rapid rate of decline began in the 1920s. At that time, there were more than 900,000 Black farm operators in the United States. In 1997, seventy-seven years later, that number had fallen drastically, to less than 19,000.
Table 1. U.S. Farms Operated by Blacks and Whites 1900-1997

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Blacks</th>
<th>% Change</th>
<th>Whites</th>
<th>% Change</th>
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<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>18,451</td>
<td>-1.9</td>
<td>1,882,652</td>
<td>-0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>18,816</td>
<td>-18.0</td>
<td>1,900,629</td>
<td>-8.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1987</td>
<td>22,954</td>
<td>-31.0</td>
<td>2,064,805</td>
<td>-6.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1982</td>
<td>33,250</td>
<td>-41.9</td>
<td>2,207,726</td>
<td>-8.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1978</td>
<td>57,271</td>
<td>-57.3</td>
<td>2,398,726</td>
<td>-22.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1969</td>
<td>133,973</td>
<td>-50.8</td>
<td>3,089,885</td>
<td>-9.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1959</td>
<td>272,541</td>
<td>-51.3</td>
<td>3,419,672</td>
<td>-28.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1950</td>
<td>559,980</td>
<td>-17.9</td>
<td>4,802,520</td>
<td>-10.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1940</td>
<td>681,790</td>
<td>-22.8</td>
<td>5,378,913</td>
<td>0.1</td>
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<tr>
<td>1930</td>
<td>882,852</td>
<td>-4.6</td>
<td>5,373,703</td>
<td>-2.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>1920</td>
<td>925,710</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>5,499,707</td>
<td>1.1</td>
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<tr>
<td>1910</td>
<td>893,377</td>
<td>19.6</td>
<td>5,440,619</td>
<td>9.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1900</td>
<td>746,717</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>4,970,129</td>
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Why have so many African Americans abandon agriculture? Researchers studying African American farmers suggested that African Americans were driven out of agriculture due to racism and discrimination, the mechanization of cotton, the widespread adoption of scientific and technology innovations, and the changing structure of agriculture (Brown, Christy, & Gebremedhin, 1994; Gilbert, Felin, & Sharp, 2001; Jones, 1994; Schor, 1992; United States Commission on Civil Rights, 1982; Wimberley et al., 1992; Zabawa, 1991). Schor and Wimberley et al. also suggested that African Americans left agriculture in search of a better tomorrow where the problems and hindrances of sharecropping and tenant farming no longer existed. Schweninger (1989) provided an alternative explanation for the departure of African Americans from agriculture. He indicated that African Americans
abandoned farming because of the increasing economic opportunities presented through education, urbanization, and the Civil Rights Movement.

A closer examination of the history of agriculture reveals that the decline in African American farmers can also be linked to the performance of the overall agricultural economy. A review of twentieth century agriculture indicates that American farm operators have faced an environment that has been highly unstable, risky, and filled with numerous uncertainties (Hoag, 1999; Knutson, Penn, & Flinchbaugh, 1998). Farm-operators in the United States have also had to contend with low market prices and low farm incomes, and operate in an environment where supply has far exceeded demand (Hoag; Knutson, Penn, & Boehm, 1990; Knutson et al., 1998).

Economic conditions in U.S. agriculture have fluctuated since the 1930s. American agriculture has gone from “...surpluses to deficits and back to surpluses, from bust to boom and back to bust” (Knutson et al., 1990, p. 26). During the early 1970s, U.S. agriculture experienced its biggest boom. This period was referred to as the “golden years” of agriculture (Knutson et al., 1998, 1990). Due to conditions resulting in low supply in the global market, demand for U.S. agricultural products increased significantly. The increase in demand for U.S. products resulted in “...a 73% increase in real net cash income per farm from 1970 to 1973, and a 33% increase from 1970 to 1979” (Knutson et al., 1990, p. 208). The golden years in agriculture were short-lived and were once again followed by low farm income, low prices, and excessive capacities.
Since the early 1980s, American agriculture has continued to exhibit similar patterns of instability. "American agriculture has gone from chronic surpluses to a world food crisis, back to surpluses, through a farm financial crisis, and to a decade of what would appear to be a relatively balanced supply-demand situation" (Knutson et al., 1998, p. 214). The unstable nature of agriculture has spilled over into other areas of rural America. Many rural areas within America have experienced excessive poverty and deterioration in infrastructure, health, and education. Many rural communities have also witnessed an increase in the outmigration of youth (Knutson et al., 1998).

**Traditional Agricultural Programs**

Agriculture in the United States has been in a crisis for decades. Since the 1930s, the U.S. government has responded to the agricultural crisis by implementing a series of agricultural programs that were designed to stimulate the agricultural economy by supporting farm incomes and stabilizing agricultural prices (Jones, 1994; Knutson et al., 1998, 1990). Regardless of farm size, race, gender, or any other unique characteristics, farmers are able to borrow money, increase their incomes, and obtain better prices by participating in these programs (Gilbert et al., 2001; Jones).

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) is responsible for administering agricultural programs. USDA agencies such as the Farm Service Agency (FSA), Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service (CSREES), Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), and Rural Economic
Community Development (RECD) work with farmers at the local level to ensure that they receive the maximum benefits from agricultural programs. In 1994, the Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service (ASCS), Federal Crop Insurance Corporation (FCIC), and Farmers Home Administration (FmHA) were combined to form the Farm Service Agency (Farm Service Agency, n.d.). This agency was created to “provide technical assistance to improve farm production, financial aid to help rural families acquire decent housing and economically viable farms, and price supports to protect farmers from the hazards of the market” (Grim, 1996, p. 321).

The Farm Service Agency and the Cooperative Extension Service have also been assigned the responsibility of providing education training to American farmers through the implementation of agricultural education programs. The essence of the agricultural educational programs is to disseminate information to American farmers to assist them with “developing sound farm management practices, analyzing problems, and planning the best use of available resources…” (Farm Service Agency, 2001, p. 1).

Scholars and critics of government agricultural programs have questioned the effectiveness of these programs and whether or not they had an unintended impact on American farmers. Hoag (1999), Jones (1994), and the National Commission on Small Farms (1998) have suggested that government programs may have hindered the agricultural movement by operating in an environment that caters to large farm operations, while providing little or no benefit to small farm operators, who account for 94% of the two million U.S. farmers. Questions that have been presented
regarding the efficiency and effectiveness of agricultural programs include the following:

- Have agricultural programs and policies accomplish their stated goals and objectives?
- Do agricultural programs truly benefit those farmers who are most in need?
- Have agricultural programs provided the necessary financial, technical, and educational assistance to all farmers regardless of race, gender, age, or other unique characteristics?
- Are these programs implemented in a manner that contributes to the economic sustainability of all American farmers?
- What type and quality of service has been provided through agricultural programs?

The answers to these questions vary and are largely dependent on the farm size. For the larger and non-minority farmer, they have received the larger share of benefits from government programs, while small, limited-resource farmers have received very little or no benefit at all from government programs (National Commission on Small Farms, 1998). The disparities among large and small, limited-resource farmers have been observed in the structure and implementation of agricultural programs and policies (Brown et al., 1994; Jones, 1994; Payne, 1991; National Commission on Small Farms, 1998). For example, agricultural support payment policies were designed to provide payments to protect family farms or financially stressed farmers. However, payments were calculated on the basis of
volume production, therefore, giving a larger share of the payments to large firms (National Commission on Small Farms, 1998). According to Brown et al. "...10% of the larger farms received 75 to 90% of the benefits" (p. 63). As a result of receiving these payments, the larger firms were able "to further capitalize and expand their operations" (National Commission on Small Farms, p. 18). In addition, agricultural programs were also structured in a manner that rewarded program staff when they worked with larger farms. According to a report released by the Civil Rights Action Team (CRAT) in 1997:

...Field level employees, those closest to farmers, often work under an incentive system that is averse to serving minority and other small producers.... Field employees' performance ratings are often based on measurement systems that favor large, wealthy landowners. County loan officers are rewarded based on the total number of acres served by program dollars, for having low default rates, and for dispensing all of the funds allocated to them – a performance management system that rewards service to large, financially, sound producers while working against small and minority farmers. (p. 8)

In evaluating the benefits received by the small, limited-resource, African American farmer, researchers have suggested that most African American farmers have not received any benefits or even participated in agricultural programs (Franklin & Moss, 2000; Pennick, 1996). "In fact, until the late 1980s African American farmers were left to fend for themselves for the most part, even though there were government programs mandated to assist all limited resource farmers" (Pennick, p. 1). Franklin and Moss used the crop reduction program as an example to substantiate the claim that African American farmers received little benefit from traditional government agricultural programs. Franklin and Moss wrote:
In the crop reduction program of the Agricultural Adjustment Administration (AAA) farmers received cash benefits for plowing under their cotton, wheat, and tobacco crops and for slaughtering their hogs. While the farmer's cash benefits rose to billions of dollars under the AAA, many of the grants intended for African-American farmers were dissipated and misappropriated. Many landlords took advantage of illiterate sharecroppers and tenants and kept the checks intended for them. (p. 433)

Grim (1996) examined FHA records to determine the extent to which African Americans participated in government programs and their knowledge of these programs. Her findings indicated that prior to the Civil Rights Movement African American farmers were disconnected from farm programs and lacked any knowledge of the loans available to them. “Seventy-two percent did not know that the FHA had loans for soil and water improvement. Fifty-seven percent did not know about loans to help build, buy, or fix up a house or farm building. Sixty-five percent did not know that the FHA made loans to help buy land” (Grim, p. 322).

According to Zabawa (1989), the success and economic viability of small, limited-resource African American farmers are highly dependent on obtaining adequate financial assistance, as well as technical and outreach assistance that targeted record keeping, marketing, alternative enterprises, managerial training, technology transfer, and the dissemination of information regarding government programs. Bagi and Bagi (1989) reported that even though African American farmers have a great need for this type of assistance, they have a much lower demand for extension information than that of White farmers. African American farmers are often labeled as being hard to reach or as non-traditional clients because they have a history of failing to seek out relevant information from traditional sources such as
Farm Service Agency and Cooperative Extension (Bagi & Bagi; McCray, 1994; Simon, 1990).

Historically, participation in government programs, in particular Extension, by African American farmers has been limited. African American farmers failed to attend events sponsored by Extension because they view the Extension Service as something for other people (McCray, 1994). “Most people would be hesitant to attend a meeting, program, or activity (even though it’s advertised for the general public and accompanied with EEO statements) that is held at church, country club, or other location that might not receive them on some other day, for some other occasion” (McCray, 1994, p. 3). Factors that restricted African Americans’ participation in government programs includes: (a) racial discrimination in the implementation of agricultural programs; (b) having little or no knowledge of existing programs; (c) not being able to fully comprehend the rules and regulations surrounding government programs; (d) having lower educational levels; and (e) operating and living in a social, political, and cultural environment that traditionally promoted inequitable educational opportunities and inferior educational conditions for African Americans (Bagi & Bagi, 1989; Jones, 1994).

Nontraditional Agricultural Programs

In an effort to remove disparities and to provide limited-resource, small farmers with culturally relevant, farmer-specific, technical outreach assistance, the federal government implemented a series of nontraditional agricultural programs.
These nontraditional programs were designed to assist the minority, small, limited-resource farmer who had not benefited from traditional agricultural programs.

During the fiscal year of 1983, President Ronald Reagan issued Executive Order 12320. Executive Order 12320 provided one to two million dollars annually to Historically Black Colleges and Universities to establish Small Farmer Training and Technical Assistance Projects (Pennick & Gray, 1999; Shea & Lyons, 1990). Two years later, the 1985 Farm Bill authorized the continuation of funding for the Small Farmer Training and Technical Assistance Program. In addition, in 1987, the “…Agricultural Credit Act of 1987 required Farmers Home Administration to assist socially disadvantaged individuals by establishing an outreach program, to make farm ownership loans and inventory farmland more available, and to continue to provide technical assistance” (Shea & Lyons, p. 69).

Farmers Home Administration provided grants to 11 institutions that had a history and proven track record of working with small, limited-resource farmers. Institutions that received grants included: Tuskegee University, University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff, New Mexico State University, Federation of Southern Cooperatives/Land Assistance Fund, University of Vermont, University of Missouri, Prairie View A & M University, Florida A & M University, North Carolina A & T State University, Alcorn State University, and Southern University (Shea & Lyons, 1990).

The overall goal of these small farm projects was to “…enhance the ability of small farmers to operate a farming enterprise independently and produce income adequate to service debts, maintain farm operations and provide a reasonable standard of living” (Shea & Lyons, 1990, p. 70). Individual small farm projects
provided technical and outreach assistance through one-on-one training and farm visits. Farmers received training in the following areas: (a) farm accounting and record keeping, (b) individualized custom farm planning, (c) production practices, and (d) diversification of marketing (Shea & Lyons).

This first wave of nontraditional agricultural programs targeting minority, limited-resource farmers provided a strong and solid foundation; however, the job was far from over. The small farm program was administered with limited funding. If a real and significant impact were to be made, additional funding would be required. From 1987-1990, several grassroots organizations and 1890 institutions began an aggressive campaign to obtain additional funding for institutions servicing minority farmers. As a result, the Minority Farmers Rights Act was developed. The Minority Farmers Rights Act called for a “$10 million dollar outreach and educational program targeting FmHA Ownership and Operating loans, a registry of minority farmers, more employment and participation by people of color on USDA staff and farmer committees, reports on Civil Rights Performance, and equal access to all USDA programs” (Pennick & Gray, 1999, p. 2). Both Congressmen Mike Espy of Mississippi and Wyche Fowler of Georgia sponsored this bill. In 1990, the Minority Farmers Rights Act was included in Section 2501 of the Food and Agriculture, Conservation, and Trade Act of 1990 (Pennick & Gray). The Small Farmers Outreach Training and Technical Assistance Program was the product of the Minority Farmers Rights Act. The Small Farmers Outreach Training and Technical Assistance Program is often referred to as the 2501 Program. This program is
referred to as the 2501 program because it was included in Section 2501 of the 1990 Farm Bill.

Description of the 2501 Program

The 2501 Program is a federal funded program sponsored by the United States Department of Agriculture. The goal of this program is to provide agricultural extension education services to minority farmers. The United States Department of Agriculture provides competitive grants to institutions that “…have demonstrated experience in providing agricultural education or other agricultural-related services to socially disadvantaged family farmers and ranchers in their region” (Food, Agriculture, Conservation, and Trade Act, 1990). These institutions include 1890 land grant colleges and universities, including Tuskegee University, community-based organizations, Indian Tribal Community Colleges, Alaska Native Cooperative Colleges, and Hispanic Servicing Post-Secondary Educational Institutions. In 1994, twenty-eight institutions received five-year grants to establish small farm projects. A list of each institution receiving 2501 grants from 1994-2000 is provided in Table 2.

The small farm projects are focused on reversing or slowing down the decline of socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers leaving agriculture. Socially disadvantaged farmers or ranchers are defined as farmers or ranchers who “…have been subjected to racial or ethnic prejudice because of their identity as members of a group without regard to their individual qualities” (Food, Agriculture, Conservation, and Trade Act of 1990, 1990, p. 4). Females, African Americans, American Indians, Asian or Pacific Islanders, and operators of Spanish origin are considered to be part
Table 2. 2501 Small Farm Projects 1994-2000

<table>
<thead>
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<tr>
<td>American Indian Opportunities Industrialization Center “Project Grow”</td>
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<td>Arkansas Land and Development Corporation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delaware State University &amp; University of Maryland, Eastern Shore</td>
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<td>Eastern Oklahoma State College</td>
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<td>Federation of Southern Cooperatives</td>
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<td>Florida A &amp; M University</td>
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<td>Fort Berthold Community College</td>
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<td>Lac Court Oreilles Ojibwa Community College</td>
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<td>Tennessee State University</td>
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<td>Texas A &amp; M University, Women in Agriculture, Management Development</td>
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<td>Tuskegee University</td>
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<tr>
<td>University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff</td>
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<tr>
<td>University of Vermont Women’s Agricultural Network</td>
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<td>Virginia State University</td>
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Source: Data provided by the United States Department of Agriculture National Office of Outreach (n. d.)

of the socially disadvantaged group (Food, Agriculture, Conservation, and Trade Act of 1990, p. 4).

Grant recipients are responsible for the following activities: (a) providing technical assistance to qualifying applicants, (b) assisting them in applying for loans, (c) developing sound farm management practices, (d) identifying and removing obstacles that prevent the full participation of socially disadvantaged farmers in FSA
ownership and operating loan programs, (e) obtaining information on application and bidding procedures, and (f) testing innovative solutions to existing or anticipated issues or problems that the farmer may encounter (Dismukes, Harwood, & Bentley, 1997; Federal Register, 2001, p. 21608-216090).

The 2501 Program is administered by USDA National Office of Outreach (see Figure 1). The primary responsibility of this office is to strengthen the outreach efforts of USDA to limited-resource farmers and ranchers and under-represented

![Diagram of the 2501 Program](image_url)

**Figure 1: Structure of the 2501 Program**
customers. Funds are channeled through USDA state offices and then distributed to
the individual small farm projects. The individual small farm projects are
implemented at the grassroots level. The small farm projects provide services
directly to minority farmers. This study focuses on the experiences of individual
2501 projects targeting African American farmers.

**Problem Statement**

The socially disadvantaged, small, limited-resource farmer has faced a myriad
of agricultural-related problems, including low market prices, restricted market
access, limited income, fixed resources, and adverse weather conditions. The
experiences of socially disadvantaged farmers are remarkably different from the
traditional farmer because they have been denied equal access to valuable technical
and financial assistance through government programs. The socially
disadvantaged, small, limited-resource farmer has also faced racial discrimination at
the hands of those agencies that have been assigned the task of servicing all
American farmers. These two factors combined played a major role in forcing
thousands of socially disadvantaged farmers off of their land and out of farming. This
historical sequence of events had a devastating impact on the long-term survival of
the socially disadvantaged, limited-resource farmer.

In examining the experiences of the African American farmer in American
agriculture, the African American experiences are similar to other socially
disadvantaged farmers; however, they exhibit characteristics that are unique to the
African American population and are remarkably different from other socially disadvantaged farmers. Some may ask why are the experiences of African American farmers different from the experiences of other socially disadvantaged farmers? Answers to this question can be found by closely examining the United States Census of Agriculture and through a careful examination of the history of African Americans in the United States.

According to the Census of Agriculture, with the exception of African American farmers, all other socially disadvantaged groups have experienced an increase in the number of farm operators from 1987 to 1997 (see Table 3). African American farmers are the only socially disadvantaged group that has continued a downward spiral. In 1987, there were 22,954 African American farm operators in the United States. In 1997, that number had fallen to 18,451. In comparison, in 1987, the number of American Indian farmers were 7,134, ten years later their numbers


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<tr>
<td>Blacks</td>
<td>22,954</td>
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<td>American Indian</td>
<td>7,134</td>
<td>8,346</td>
<td>10,638</td>
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<tr>
<td>Asian or Pacific Islander</td>
<td>7,900</td>
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<td>131,641</td>
<td>145,156</td>
<td>165,102</td>
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<tr>
<td>Spanish Origin</td>
<td>17,476</td>
<td>20,956</td>
<td>27,717</td>
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had risen to 10,638. In evaluating the remaining socially disadvantaged groups, there were 7,900 Asian or Pacific Islander farm operators in 1987. In 1997, there were 8,731. Increases in the number of farm-operators can also be observed among females and farm operators of Hispanic origin. In 1987, there were 131,641 and 17,476, respectively, among females and Hispanic farm operators. Ten years later, their numbers increased to 165,102 and 27,717, respectively.

In addition to their declining numbers, a large percentage of the problems encountered by African American farmers can be attributed to the establishment of a political, economic, and legal system in the United States that promoted unequal opportunities in education and restricted opportunities for economic advancement for the African American population (Beauford & Nelson, 1988; Brown et al., 1994; Sigler & Smith, 1998). Sigler and Smith suggested that in order “for a minority group to flourish in a competitive society, the group needs two forms of support: the means to participate in a culture’s economic system, called human capital, and a set of laws to make the participation possible, called bootstraps” (p. 105). If a group does not have the necessary human capital or laws to protect them, then the group cannot compete. For several decades, African Americans did not possess either of these two components and were restricted from reaping the benefits of a thriving economic system. “From emancipation to the passage of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, the government never issued African Americans a system of protection to safeguard their right to grow and develop, as it did for other groups” (Sigler & Smith, p. 105). Instead the United States government established a system that was based on laws that denied the African American people equal access to government programs and
implemented an educational system that promoted inferior and limited educational opportunities.

Inferior educational opportunities and limited knowledge of how the political and economic system worked resulted in poor educational training for the African American farmer. African American farmers were able to effectively produce different crops and raise livestock, but did not have the necessary managerial skills to successfully operate a farming enterprise (Brown et al., 1994). When combined, Brown et al. stated the inadequate managerial skills and the inequities associated with Extension Service Programs, African American farmers were less able to utilize information on the latest technological developments, and evaluate relevant market opportunities and make modifications for their farming operations. These factors (limited land, capital, and management) weakened African American farmers’ competitive position and led many to leave agriculture. (p. 60)

In addition, there were few opportunities for African American farmers to gain experience with enterprises other than cotton and tobacco. As a result of these limited opportunities, African American farmers were unable to diversify their operations or be exposed to alternative enterprises therefore limiting the possibility of economic viability (Beauford & Nelson, 1988).

**Purpose of the Study**

The overall purpose of this study is to provide an analysis of the implementation process of selected 2501 projects working with African American farmers. Specifically, this study examines the experiences of project staff working for
selected Small Farmer Outreach Training and Technical Assistance Projects, in particular, 1890 land-grant institutions and community-based organizations. This particular study examines the 2501 Program within the context of program planning, implementation evaluation, and agricultural and extension education.

Implementation evaluation involves “involves finding out what actually is happening in the program, what does the program consist of, what are the program’s key characteristics, what’s working and what’s not working” (Patton, 1997, p. 196). Implementation evaluation looks at the internal dynamics and operations of the program. It seeks to understand the strengths, weaknesses, and provide explanations for successes, failures, and changes of a program (Patton). This study was framed within the context of the 2501 Program and used it as a guide for understanding the role that African American farmers play in U.S. agriculture.

**Research Questions**

The following research questions were developed:

- What were the salient features or key characteristics of selected small farm projects?
- What specific activities were the 2501 projects engaged in?
- To what extent was the 2501 Program implemented as planned and what factors may have impeded its successful implementation?
- What was the relationship between selected small farm projects and their major stakeholders/decision makers?
• Who benefited from the 2501 Program and in what ways?
• What was the impact of the 2501 projects on African American farmers?
• What does the future hold for the 2501 Program?

Justification of the Study

This particular study focuses exclusively on understanding the experiences of selected 2501 projects working with African American farmers. History has revealed that the struggles faced by African American farmers have been difficult. The fight for equality has not been easy and the future of the African American farmer is not certain. It is important that the history and the struggles faced by these farmers are documented. It is equally important that the processes used to ensure their sustainability and survival are also documented. This particular study is significant because it will: (a) provide insight into the problems facing African American farmers in the 21st century, (b) document successful strategies and practices that have been used to assist African American farmers, and (c) provide valuable information that can be used to design educational programs for African American farmers. This study will provide information needed to understand the 2501 Program from the experiences of those who are directly involved in the implementation of the program at the grassroots level.
Organization of the Study

This study is organized into 5 additional chapters. Chapter II provides a review of selected literature. This review of literature is focused on providing an examination of: (a) the history of African American farmers in U.S. agriculture, (b) the role that 1890 land grant institutions and their cooperative extension services have played in the survival of the African American farmer, and (c) discrimination in U. S. agriculture and its impact on the sustainability of African American farmers. Chapter II concludes with a discussion of various factors that are involved in planning agricultural extension educational programs for African American farmers. Chapter III outlines the methodological approach that was used to select the participants, and to collect and analyze the data. A profile of the participating small farm projects is presented in Chapter IV. Chapter V presents an interpretive analysis of the research findings. Summary, conclusions, and recommendations are the focus of Chapter VI.

Definitions of Terms

1890 Land-Grant College or University: Institutions eligible to receive funds under the Act of August 30, 1890 as amended, including Tuskegee University (Federal Register, 2001, p. 21612)

African Americans: Persons of African descent who were born in the United States of America.
**Farm**: Any establishment that produces and sells (or normally would have sold) at least $1,000 worth of agricultural commodities within a given calendar year.

**Farm Operator**: A person who operates a farm, either doing the work or making daily decisions about such things as planting, harvesting, feeding, and marketing. The operator may be the owner, a member of the owner’s household, a hired manager, a tenant, a renter, or a sharecropper.

**Impact**: The extent to which a program has affected the audience. It also refers to the extent to which people changed or benefited because they participated in a program (Spiegel, Leeds, & Nieto, 1997).

**Limited Resource Farmers or Producers**: Individuals who met one or more of the following criteria: (a) gross farm sales average $40,000 or less in each of the last three years and there is no non-farm income; (b) total household, net income, farm and non-farm income is 75% or less of the non-metropolitan median income level for the state or county; and (c) farm or ranch size is significantly smaller than average (Dishongh & Worthen, 1991 as cited in Tackie, Baharanyi, Findlay, & Zabawa, 1998).

**Policy**: A course of action or guiding principle pursued by the government (Knutson, et al., 1998, p. 3).

**Project**: The total activity within the scope of the program as identified in the grant or cooperative agreement (Federal Register, 2001, p. 21613).

**Small Farm**: Any establishment with annual gross agricultural sales of less than $20,000 (Steele, 1997, p. 27).
Small Farmers Outreach Training and Technical Assistance Program: A program sponsored by USDA. This program focuses on the provision of agricultural extension education to minority, socially, disadvantaged farmers. This program is also referred to as the 2501 program, because it was included in Section 2501 of the 1990 Farm Bill.

Socially Disadvantaged Group: A group whose members have been subjected to racial or ethnic prejudice because of their identity as members of a group without regard to their individual qualities (i.e. females, African Americans, American Indians, Asian or Pacific Islanders, and operators of Spanish origin) (Food, Agriculture, Conservation, and Trade Act, 1990).

Socially Disadvantaged Farmer or Rancher: A farmer or rancher who is a member of a socially disadvantaged group (Food, Agriculture, Conservation, and Trade Act, 1990).
CHAPTER II. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This particular chapter is divided into seven sections. Section one provides a historical review of African Americans in United States agriculture from 1619 through 1880. Specifically, this section evaluates the structural changes in agriculture after the emancipation of the African American slave. Section two also provides a historical analysis of agricultural extension education and its impact on the African American farmer. Section three discusses discrimination in U.S. agriculture and its impact on the sustainability of the African American farmer. Understanding the program planning process for African American farmers is the focus of section four. Section five engages in a discussion of the significance of understanding the targeted audience. Specifically, this section creates a profile of African American farmers and their social, political, and economic environments. Section six addresses the various factors involved in designing learning experiences for African American farmers. The final section examines issues in evaluating agricultural education programs for African American farmers.

Historical Review of the Role of Blacks in U.S. Agriculture

From 1619-1880

African Americans have participated in farming for over three hundred years in the United States (Royce, 1993; Schor, 1992; Wimberley et al., 1992; Zabawa, 1989). Throughout this timeframe, several important events have shaped and defined the role of African Americans in United States agriculture. The first of these
events occurred in 1619, when Africans were stolen from their native countries and brought to the British colonies in America (Franklin & Moss, 2000; Mayberry, 1991; White, 2000). They were forced into slavery for 244 years (Mayberry & White). The African slave, or Negro slave, as they were called during that period, were forced to work under a system that considered them the property of landowners (Franklin & Moss; Mayberry; Perry, 1992). "During this time, they were detribalized and stripped of their cultural heritage, their family structure was destroyed, and they were assigned second class citizen status..." (Sigler & Smith, 1998, p. 105).

Negro slaves worked on large antebellum plantations and farms (Royce, 1993). According to Franklin and Moss (2000) "more than one-half of the slaves were employed as field workers on plantations with holdings of more than 20 slaves..." (p. 140). The Negro slave participated primarily in agricultural-related activities, which included the cultivation of cotton, rice, tobacco, and sugarcane (Franklin & Moss; White, 2000). White described the responsibilities of the slave:

...Their work was backbreaking. The average slave worked in cotton production, and during [the] harvest season was expected to pick about 130 to 150 pounds of cotton per day. Work in sugar and rice was equally hard, if not harder. Both crops demanded constant cultivation and the digging of drainage ditches in snake-infested fields. At harvest time on the sugar plantations, slaves had to cut, strip, and carry cane to the sugarhouse for boiling. This was extremely strenuous work. Rice cultivation was even more miserable. Since rice is grown under water, slaves spent long hours standing in water up to their knees. (p. 176)

Slaves were forced to work under inhumane conditions and as part of a work gang. Franklin and Moss (2000) vividly described the working conditions for slave work gangs: "... gangs of slaves were taken to the fields and put to work under the
supervision of the owner or the overseer. The leader instructed them about when to begin work, when to eat, and when to end the workday" (p. 144).

On January 1, 1863, President Abraham Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation (Franklin & Moss, 2000; Mayberry, 1991). “The Emancipation Proclamation freed all slaves in the southern states that had seceded from the Union” (Mayberry, 1991, p. 199). “All other slaves—and there were some 800,000 unaffected by the provisions of this act—were not yet free” (Mayberry, 1991, p. 198). In 1865, the Thirteenth Amendment abolished slavery in the United States (Franklin & Moss). It was anticipated that freedom would bring the former Negro slave prosperity, along with social and economic success. However, the reality of the situation revealed a far more ominous outcome. According to Royce (1993), upon liberation, the newly freed slaves found themselves in a struggle for survival. They were illiterate, living in rural areas, engaged in agriculture, and had no formal training (Mayberry, 1989).

The Captured and Abandoned Property Act of 1863, which was administered by the newly created Freedmen’s Bureau, was designed to provide opportunities for Blacks to acquire land (Royce, 1993). In particular, Blacks were supposed to acquire 40 acres of confiscated land (Royce). This is where the term “forty acres and a mule” evolved from (Gilbert et al., 2001; Royce; Schor, 1992, 1996). Schor suggested that the term “forty acres and a mule” “...evolved from the hopes of abolitionists and, in the practices of land preemption in the West, was given form by Union Officers in and outside of the Freedmen’s Bureau, and in the Southern Homestead Act passed during Reconstruction” (p. 72). Royce offers an alternative explanation of the origin
of the term "forty acres and a mule". He suggested this term developed from the beliefs held by the newly freed slaves that they would acquire the land and possessions of their former masters, which had been confiscated by the federal government.

According to Sigler and Smith (1998):

> If the United States government had simply allocated each ex-slave family 40 acres and a mule after emancipation, this action would have served as a protection against poverty. This measure would have given African Americans economic self-reliance within the first generation of their emancipation. Instead, the limited programs of the Freedmen's Bureau proved inadequate. The second generation of African Americans would have flourished upon the land they inherited from their parents. The rationale that policymakers gave at the time for not allocating ex-slave families 40 acres and a mule was anchored in the American democratic assumption that anyone who wanted to could pull themselves up by his bootstraps, that is, succeed through his unaided efforts... But this argument was a contradiction to the existing public policy. At the time that policymakers were arguing against giving African Americans forty acres and a mule, Congress passed the Homestead Act of 1862, a bootstrap that provided free land for German and Scandinavian immigrants. Instead of offering these groups just 40 acres, the government gave them 160 acres of land. (p. 106)

Only a limited number of Freedmen received land under the Southern Homestead Act (Schor, 1992). According to Schor, "a little redistribution did occur in isolated parts of the South" (p. 72). However, the majority and the remaining Blacks found themselves landless and in economic distress, struggling for survival. Royce (1993) provided a detailed description of the plight of the newly freed slave. He indicated that the Freedman found themselves:

> ...employed by their former masters, organized into work gangs, placed under the strict supervision of White overseers, subjected to a slave like work regimen, set to work cultivating cotton, rice, or
sugar, housed in the antebellum slave quarters, and bound by a variety of rules and regulations governing everything from work schedule to deployment. (p. 25)

The Introduction of the Sharecropping System

Brown (1976) suggested that "...emancipation did not destroy the old plantation system" (p. 202); it only changed the structure of it and provided it with a new name and title. The old plantation system survived the liberation of the Negro slave for several years (Royce, 1993). It was then replaced by the sharecropping system. Royce indicated that sharecropping was a different form of organized labor. It was based on the division of large, single-unit plantations into smaller plots of land ranging from 30 to 50 acres each (Royce). With the introduction of sharecropping, the smaller plots

... were leased on a yearly basis to individual families, who operated as the primary unit of production. Freed people abandoned the old slave housing and took up residence in separate family cabins located on their designated plots of land. Each family at the end of the season received as compensation a share of the crop, usually one-third to one-half; sharecroppers were responsible for feeding and clothing themselves, while the landlord supplied all the farming provisions. (p. 181)

From initial observations, the sharecropping system appeared to be a workable solution to the problems facing the newly freed slave. The question that continued to resurface is, why did the sharecropping system have such a negative impact on the economic advancement of African Americans? Perlo (1953); Perry (1992); and Royce (1993) each attempted to provide explanations surrounding the inadequacies of the sharecropping system. They concluded that the sharecropping
system stripped African Americans of any opportunities for economic survival and land ownership. Perry described the sharecropping system as the "most brutal form of social and political oppression that was used in the economic exploitation of African Americans" (p. 1). Royce added that the "sharecropping system left many Black sharecroppers in a state of permanent indebtedness, restricting their mobility, adding to their economic dependence, and culminating in a system of debt peonage that persisted for decades" (p. 219).

The Black farmer did not benefit from the sharecropper's agreement (Perlo, 1953). Perlo suggested that it would have been more advantageous for Freed men to enter into an agreement that would pay them by the day or hour; instead of entering into a yearly contract with no pay. The outcome for the yearly contract is the same no matter how many days or hours the sharecropper works (Perlo). "With the sharecropping system the landlord can drive the cropper and his entire family for less than the cash wages of a single hired hand-and in such a way as to get the highest output per acre with the minimum outlay for wages and equipment" (Perlo, p. 85).

Several scholars have studied the origins of the sharecropping system. Researchers including Perlo (1953), Royce (1993), and Sutch and Ransom (1978) questioned why and how this system developed. These researchers suggested that the introduction of the sharecropping system happened by accident and was not a planned event. Royce suggested that the sharecropping system developed as the result of a codependency relationship between the newly freed slave and the landowner. "Freed people remained dependent on planters, because of the virtual
monopoly of land, and planters remained dependent on their former slaves, because of the latter's virtual monopoly of labor" (Royce, p. 183). According to Sutch and Ransom, Blacks were attracted to the sharecropping system because it was an attractive form of land tenure. This system provided an opportunity for the Black family to work their own farm.

Royce (1993) concluded that the sharecropping provided little economic gains for the freed people. They were economically and politically vulnerable and were unable to protect their civil rights. According to Royce, sharecropping proved to be a major economic mistake for the freed people.

**Historical Review of Agricultural Extension Education and 1890 Land-Grant Institutions**

Agricultural extension education is defined as an intensive educational outreach process that involves the dissemination of practical agricultural information to rural residents with the intent of enhancing their farming practices and improving their living conditions. According to Van den Ban and Hawkins (1996), "extension involves the conscious use of communication of information to help people form sound opinions and make good decisions" (p. 9). The extension process typically is accomplished through one-on-one consultations with individual farmers, the dissemination of publications; as well as through the hosting of workshops, informal group discussions, conferences, and demonstrations (Mosher, 1978; Seevers, Graham, Gamon, & Conklin, 1997).
In the United States, the Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service (CSREES) has the official responsibly of administering agricultural extension programs. This agency was established in 1914 under the Smith-Lever Act (Mayberry, 1989; Seevers et al., 1997). The Smith-Lever Act created a partnership between the United States Department of Agriculture and the 1862 and 1890 land-grant universities, including Tuskegee University.

The 1862 and 1890 land grant universities and colleges were established by the first and second Morrill Acts. The first Morrill Act of 1862 established the National Land-Grant system and created agricultural colleges in each of the states. The 1862 universities were created to service the agricultural educational needs of Whites; however, Blacks were excluded from receiving training at these institutions (Demissie, 1990). “In 1890 a second Morrill Act was passed to strengthen and expand the provisions of the first Morrill Act” (Mayberry, 1989, p. 45). The second Morrill Act ensured the availability of agricultural education for Blacks. The second Morrill Act “… called for the equitable, not equal, division of federal funds for agricultural education. It aimed at solving a problem in states that were practicing racial school segregation…” (Schor, 1992, p.73). Tuskegee University, at that time, did not receive funding under the second Morrill Act (Mayberry).

On November 28, 1990, the Smith-Lever Act of 1914 was amended. Section One of the amended Smith-Lever Act outlined its mission. Accordingly, the mission is “…to aid in diffusing among the people of the United States useful and practical information on subjects relating to agriculture, home economics, and rural energy, and to encourage the application of the same…” (Seevers et al., 1997, p. 257). The
Smith-Lever Act also specified in section two that "...agricultural extension work shall consist of the development of practical applications of research knowledge and giving of instruction and practical demonstrations of existing or improved practices or technologies in agriculture, home economics, and rural energy, and subjects relating thereto persons not attending or resident in said colleges in the several communities, and imparting information on said subjects through demonstrations, publications, and otherwise..." (p. 257).

From its inception, the Cooperative Extension Service operated as a racially segregated agency (Whayne, 1998). Whayne indicated that the "Smith-Lever Act embodied ideas formulated by those who had been involved for decades in addressing the problems confronting agriculture, but the form the legislation took was heavily influenced by southern senators who were determined to impose restrictions on Black extension" (p. 524). Senator Hoke Smith of Georgia "... warned his colleagues that the South would not touch the legislation if it contained an equitability provision. In its final form, the Extension Service would be segregated and without any pretense of equality or equitability as to funding" (Schor, 1996, p. 48) among the 1890 and 1862 schools. Whayne suggested that the Smith-Lever Act of 1914,

...dealt a telling blow to Black agricultural education. While it sanctioned a segregated program, it also channeled funds through White agricultural schools, which discriminated further against Black institutions like the Tuskegee Institute in Alabama. Of the $10,000 Smith-Lever funds designated for Alabama's extension efforts, the state allocated only $1,800 for Black colleges, $200 to Alabama A &M near Huntsville, and $1,600 to Tuskegee. (p. 524)
Black land-grant institutions did not receive formula funding for their agricultural programs until years later. A summary of the events that resulted in 1890 institutions receiving federal funds is described below:

Beginning in 1967 under Public Law 89-106, the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Agriculture allocated $283,000 of discretionary funds for research at the sixteen Black land-grant institutions for an average of $17,658 each. In 1972, the agricultural research allocation was increased significantly, and Tuskegee University became eligible to receive these funds. The Food and Agriculture Act of 1977 (PL 95-113) provided permanent or sustained institutional federal funding for Black land-grant colleges. Section 1445 of that Act—the Evans-Allen Research Program—provided formula funded programs for 1890 institutions. Four years later in 1981, this act was amended to provide that no less than 6% of Smith-Lever funds be allocated for extension work at the 1890 institutions. Under Public Law 97-98, Section 1443, Congress authorized $50 million over 5 years to upgrade agricultural research facilities and equipment at historically black land-grant colleges and universities. (Humphries, 1992, p. 7)

Booker T. Washington and Agricultural Extension Education for Blacks

The Smith-Lever Act of 1914 provided the 1890 institutions, including Tuskegee Institute, with very little financial assistance. The 1890 institutions were not dependent on funds from the federal government in the establishment of their agricultural extension programs. In fact, the 1890 institutions, in particular Tuskegee Institute, were engaged in agricultural extension and outreach work for more than three decades prior to the enactment of the Smith-Lever Act of 1914 (Mayberry, 1989). According to Mayberry and Spivey (1978), agricultural extension education for the African American farmer begun with the arrival of Booker T. Washington at Tuskegee Institute in 1881.
In 1881, Booker T. Washington arrived on the campus of Tuskegee Institute in Alabama. Researchers such as Denton (1993); Mayberry (1989); and Spivey (1978) suggested that Washington started an education revolution among rural Blacks. Anyone who travels to the campus of Tuskegee University, is greeted by a statue of Booker T. Washington lifting the veil of ignorance from the Negro slave. The impact of Booker T. Washington on Black agricultural extension education was profound. Booker T. Washington was instrumental in the establishment of an innovative dissemination and delivery system of adult and agricultural extension education for rural African Americans. His work was centered on the improvement of the farming and living conditions of poor, rural Blacks.

Mayberry (1989) and Elliott (1966), in their analysis of Washington’s first few days at Tuskegee, indicated that he engaged in an extensive assessment of the education, social, and economic needs of rural Blacks. According to Elliot:

Booker T. Washington came to Tuskegee in June....There was in him a certain remarkable mettle, a gritty buoyancy, so that in the face of apparently insuperable difficulty, he seemed to grow larger than life, transported by the call to battle. Two days after his arrival, he had borrowed a mule and wagon and set out along the dusty roads to learn what he could about the people and their needs, and to let them know that a teacher, someone who cared, was among them. (p. 97)

Mayberry (1989) indicated that Washington’s primary objective was to listen to the people and to obtain first-hand accounts of their situation. His goal was to determine their needs, so that he could plan appropriate and practical educational activities for the families, students, and the community. As a result Washington instituted the first Annual Farmers Conference at Tuskegee Institute in 1892.
(Mayberry, 1991). Over 500 farm people gathered at Tuskegee to discuss their plight and how Tuskegee Institute could assist them in overcoming their adversities (Mayberry, 1989).

Tuskegee's Annual Farmers Conference led to the creation of the Farmers Institute. The Farmers' Institute was:

...one day a month schooling for the farmers and their families at no cost to them. Such subjects as the culture and value of sweet potatoes, practical farm economy, the care of young chickens, the value of deep plowing, the proper preparation of corn and cotton land, and women's helpful influence in the home were discussed at the meetings which attracted from 25 to 75 farmers. (Jones, as cited in Mayberry, 1989, p. 53)

According to Mayberry (1989), from 1881-1906 extension and outreach activities at Tuskegee Institute focused on "...bringing the uneducated Black farmers to Tuskegee Institute to drink from the fountain of agricultural wisdom" (p. 55). Washington realized that for the isolated farmer to receive any benefits and for advancement to occur, he had to take modern agricultural training to the people (Mayberry). In 1904, he discussed the possibility of designing a movable school with George Washington Carver. Carver was the head of Tuskegee's Division of Agriculture (Elliot, 1966; Mayberry) and viewed the movable school as an opportunity to strengthen "...his agriculture department and at the same time disseminate to the farmers the agricultural knowledge he was producing at the Tuskegee Experiment Station" (Mayberry, p. 56). On May 24, 1906, the Jesup Agricultural Wagon began its trips into rural areas with the sole purpose of educating and teaching Blacks about agricultural production (Elliot; Mayberry).
The Jesup Wagon was funded by Morris K. Jesup, a New York banker and philanthropist (Mayberry, 1989). It was equipped with a variety of agricultural tools that could be used to conduct practical demonstrations. Mayberry indicated that the Jesup Wagon or Movable School was a huge success. In fact, it reached over 2,000 people per month and gained national attention. White farmers were even impressed and realized its usefulness and attended the meetings. Some White farmers even requested that the Jesup Wagon visit their Black tenants (Mayberry). Booker T. Washington viewed the Jesup Wagon as one of the greatest innovations in Black agricultural extension education. According to Mayberry, Washington believed that the impact of the movable school would "break through the hard crust of custom and prepare for a new agricultural era" (p. 56).

Washington appointed the first Black extension agent, Thomas Campbell, in 1906 at Tuskegee University (Mayberry, 1989; Seevers et al., 1997; Smith, 1992). A month later the second Black extension agent was hired, at Hampton University (Mayberry). The extension agents were responsible for servicing the needs of rural Black people. They were primarily responsible for providing educational training regarding crop and livestock improvement and offering solutions on ways to improve their home, schools, incomes, and communities (Smith, p. 52).

This particular section provided a historical review of agricultural extension education at 1890 land-grant institutions. Several researchers have indicated that racial discrimination played a large role in agricultural extension education and in the inequitable disbursement of funds among land-grant institutions. The following section will examine the impact of racial discrimination in U.S. agriculture.
Discrimination in U. S. Agriculture

A review of the literature indicated that racism and discrimination were practiced within the agricultural community, and had and continues to have a significant impact on the sustainability of minority farmers. Racism and discrimination in U.S. agriculture occurred at the hands of those agencies that were assigned the responsibility of assisting American farmers and serving America’s people. History has shown that agencies within the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) engaged in discriminatory practices against minorities in the United States. "Minority farmers have lost significant amounts of land and potential farm income as a result of discrimination by FSA (Farm Service Agency) programs and the programs of its predecessor agencies, ASCS (Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service) and FmHA (Farmers Home Administration)" (CRAT, 1997, p. 30).

These claims of discrimination were not just unproven allegations directed at USDA, but were documented facts revealed through numerous reports released by the government and through sworn testimonies given in special hearings on Capitol Hill. In a hearing before the United States House of Representatives' Committee on Agriculture (1997), former Secretary of Agriculture Dan Glickman made the following statement:

We have a long history of both discrimination and perceptions of unfairness that go literally back to the middle of the 19th century. For those who look back on the progress made in the 1960s of the historic civil rights laws passed in that time and think we got the job done, I can say from my experiences at USDA, we do not yet fully practice what we preach. I’ve talked to people who have lost their farm. Good people, who lost their family land not because of a bad
crop, not because of a flood, but because of the color of their skin. (p. 94)

The examination of discrimination by USDA is not a new topic. Research revealed that this issue was thoroughly examined and documented for over four decades. In 1965, the U. S. Commission on Civil Rights released a report titled *Equal Opportunity in Farm Programs: An Appraisal of Services Rendered by Agencies of the United States Department of Agriculture.* This report concluded that discrimination existed in USDA’s external program delivery activities. In fact, USDA “…generally failed to assume responsibility for assuring equal opportunity and equal treatment to all those entitled to benefit from its programs. Instead the prevailing practice has been to follow local patterns of racial segregation and discrimination in proving assistance…” (p. 100). The commission also expressed concerns that while USDA had been “instrumental in raising the economic, educational, and social levels of thousands of farm and rural families…[a] quarter of a million Negro families stand as a glaring exception to this picture of progress” (U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, 1965, p. 8). The Commission described the Black farmer “as the group most depressed economically, most deprived educationally, and most oppressed socially. Negroes have been consistently denied access to many services, provided with inferior services when served, and segregated in federally financed agricultural programs whose task was to raise their standard of living” (p. 100).

Seventeen years later, in 1982, the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights again examined the issue of discrimination and the decline of Black farming in America. Their findings documented a trail of discrimination and other unethical practices
within USDA, in particular the Farmers Home Administration. According to the Commission, “the tragic decline of Black farms is rooted in our Nation's racial history, especially in the South” (U. S. Commission on Civil Rights, 1982, p. 176). The conclusions reached by the Commission revealed that the FmHA has a history of not placing “adequate emphasis or assigning priority to the crisis facing Black farmers” and in some cases, “FmHA may have hindered the efforts of small Black farm operators to remain a viable force in agriculture” (U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, p. IV). The Commission also concluded that there were widespread prejudicial practices in loan approval, loan servicing, and farm management assistance as administered by the Farmers Home Administration (U.S. Commission on Civil Rights).

Since the release of the 1982 report by the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, there have been several other government reports released regarding discriminatory practices within USDA agencies. The most recent reports released include, The Minority Farmer: A Disappearing American Resource-Has the Farmers Home Administration Been the Primarily Catalyst? (United States House of Representatives, Committee on Government Operations, 1990); Treatment of Minority and Limited Resource Producers by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (U.S. House of Representatives, Committee on Agriculture, subcommittee on Department of Operations, Nutrition, and Foreign Agriculture, 1997); Civil Rights at the U.S. Department of Agriculture (Civil Rights Action Team, 1997); and USDA’s Civil Rights Programs and Responsibilities (United States House of Representatives, Committee on Agriculture, Subcommittee on Department Operations, Oversight,
Nutrition, and Forestry, 1999). The most compelling of these reports occurred in 1997 by the Civil Rights Action Team (CRAT).

In 1997, Secretary of Agriculture Dan Glickman appointed the Civil Rights Action Team (CRAT). The mission of CRAT was to investigate discriminatory practices by USDA in regards to minority, small, limited-resource farmers and USDA employees. During the month of January in 1997, CRAT held 12 listening sessions in 11 different locations throughout the United States. Small and limited resource farmers gave testimonies. These farmers “told stories of years of bias, hostility, greed, ruthlessness, rudeness, and indifference not only by USDA employees, but also by the local county committees that provide access to USDA's Farm Service Agency programs” (CRAT, 1997, p. 3). They also described their experiences in being denied equal access to USDA’s programs, unfair lending practices, receiving loan approvals after the planting season was over, reductions in the requested loan amount, and longer processing times for minority loan applications. “In several Southeastern states, it took three times as long on average to process African American loan applications as it did nonminority applications” (CRAT, p. 21). This report cited testimony that described the USDA system as being “…broken, a system in which field-level workers are forced to work under an incentive system that “rewards service to large, financially sound producers while working against small and minority farmers” (CRAT, p. 8). Even worse, the CRAT report found that participation in some programs had been blocked by discriminatory county office staffs (p. 21).
The majority of minority farmers apply for operating or ownership loans through Farm Service Agency. Several steps must be accomplished for these loans to be approved. Step one involves the determination of whether or not the farmer qualifies for a FSA loan. If the applicant qualifies the application advances to the eligibility stage. In order to be determined eligible, a loan applicant must:

- Have sufficient education, training, or experience in managing and operating a farm;
- Be a citizen or legal resident of the United States;
- Have the legal capacity to incur the obligations of the loan;
- Be unable to obtain sufficient credit elsewhere at reasonable rates;
- Be the owner or tenant operator of a family farm after the loan is closed;
- Have not had a previous direct or guaranteed loan which resulted in a loss to the agency and not be delinquent on any federal debt (Farm Service Agency, 1998)

The eligibility stage also involves FSA and the loan applicant meeting to review and discuss the application. The application is then presented to the county committee to determine eligibly. The application is also reviewed for repayment ability, security and compliance with other regulations (Farm Service Agency, 1998).

Discrimination can occur in each of these stages. Decisions of whether or not a farmer is eligible to receive a loan or the availability of funds are determined by county committees that are elected by farmers in the county (Harvard, 1998). In many instances, “… committees are often found with few or no women or minority members in areas where women and minority comprise a significant proportion of
persons participating in the programs" (Payne, 1991, p.17). Due to the lack of representation of minorities on county committees and on county staffs, minority producers are “...less likely to hear about a program and have a more difficult time participating in USDA programs because they lack specific information on available services” (CRAT, 1997, p. 26). In 1994, Congress passed legislation that requires county committees to be representative of the agricultural producers in the county (CRAT). “In counties with relatively high concentrations of minority farmers without elected minority county committee members, FSA has required appointment of minority advisors to increase the awareness of and participation of minorities in FSA programs” (CRAT, p. 20). These county advisors are not allowed to vote. Due to the structure of USDA, opportunities for discrimination in the processing of loan applications are extremely high. Frequently, loan decisions are influenced by the culture of the county and the makeup of the committees. Several reports have indicated how the communities have failed to break with history and an environment that is characterized by racist behavior, therefore restricting and limiting the survival of the Black farmer (United States Commission on Civil Rights, 1982, p. 177).

Payne and CRAT have concluded that at the county level "... both the employees and the programs assume the character of the dominant culture" (Payne, p. 16) and are “influenced by the values of their communities and county committees rather than by standard policies promulgated at the national level” (CRAT, p. 18).

It also should be noted that discrimination was not always direct and visible. It was found that indirect discrimination often played a role in the success or failure of minority farmers. Indirect discrimination occurred when an USDA employee was
unwilling to assist a low-educated client with completing a difficult loan application form or informing a client of mistakes on an application one or two days prior to the application deadline, thereby, limiting the client's ability to make the necessary corrections and submit the application on time. Indirect discrimination also occurred when county staff was unwilling to assist farmers in understanding the program eligibility requirements and by failing to provide basic information about programs (CRAT, 1997)

In 1997, a class-action lawsuit was filed by Black farmers against USDA. On April 14, 1999, a settlement was approved. The Black farmers’ lawsuit resulted in a settlement that was based on two components, or tracks (Robinson, 2000). Track A called for $50,000 settlement plus the tax liability on that amount. To qualify under track A, the farmer must have presented evidence of discrimination. In addition, if farmers had current debt with USDA, they also could receive a write-off of that debt and the taxes owed on it (Robinson). On the other hand, if a farmer believed that the $50,000 settlement was unfair because of the extreme circumstances of their case, they could select Track B. Farmers who chose track B were required to submit documentation supporting their claim. If it was proven successfully, a higher settlement would be awarded. If they failed to support their claim they would not receive anything (Robinson).

In concluding, discrimination in agriculture has affected the progress of African American farmers significantly. In many cases, the presence of discrimination was the determining factor as to whether a Black farmer achieved success or failed at his or her farming endeavors. As one farmer from Mississippi
stated regarding county officials working in USDA offices, they have the power "to send you up the road to fortune, or down the road to foreclosure" (CRAT, 1997, p. 7).

This review of literature so far, has focused on providing a historical review of African Americans in U.S. agriculture. The remaining three sections will focus on planning, implementing, and evaluating agricultural extension education programs for African American farmers.

The Program Planning Process: The Case of Black Farmers

There are a wide array of program planning models in the literature; however, program-planning models designed exclusively for the African American farmer remain elusive. Leading researchers in the areas of adult and extension education have made valuable contributions to the program planning literature (Axxin & Axxin, 1997; Boone, 1985; Boyle, 1981; Cervero & Wilson, 1994; Knowles, 1980; Seevers, et al., 1997). They each proposed innovative program planning models. A close examination of each of the models indicated that the models exhibit similar characteristics. The models were based on a format that calls for: (a) an analysis of the situation, (b) identification of the targeted audience, (c) an assessment of the needs of targeted audience, (d) establishing goals and objectives for the program, (e) identifying learning experiences to meet those objectives, (f) organizing learning experiences, and (g) evaluating the program. Various components of each of these models could be used in designing programs for African American farmers; however, the ideas presented by Cervero and Wilson were more representative of the
problems and issues facing planners of American agricultural extension education programs targeting African American farmers. Cervero and Wilson captured the essence of what many planners for African American farmers are faced with everyday. These two authors presented an alternative to the traditional form of program planning.

Cervero and Wilson (1994) suggested that the existing literature on program planning has serious deficiencies and is based on an unrealistic view of the world and the program planning process. They argued that traditional theories and program planning models give the illusion that "planners face well-defined problems and have a full array of alternatives, complete information about the context, and unlimited resources to solve these problems" (p. 118). In reality this is not the case. They challenge program planners to be honest in their writings and to describe what really happens in the process, whether it is good or bad.

As an example of the misrepresentation of program planning, Cervero and Wilson (1994) used the process of need identification to prove their point. Researchers writing about the needs identification process usually outlined a series of steps that were centered around distinguishing the various forms of needs, identification of the key players, and selection of appropriate methods to assess those needs (Boyle, 1981; Seevers, et al., 1997). According to Cervero and Wilson, the needs identification process is not that simple or convenient. It is influenced by many factors, including "the values and interests of others involved, organizational and interpersonal power relationships, available resources, and a knowledge of the history of planning efforts in the situation" (p. 6).
Cervero and Wilson's (1994) perspective regarding program planning accurately conveyed what planners working with African American farmers are faced with. These planners were often assigned the task of implementing programs with limited resources and limited knowledge of when these resources would be disbursed (Baharanyi & Zabawa, 1996). Planning an effective and efficient program, therefore, became a survival of the fittest. The planner was also faced with the task of having to work in an environment with a variety of stakeholders with competing interests. The environment is very political and the planner must proceed with caution. A good planner has to develop skills in negotiation as well as in navigating different power relationships. Cerervo and Wilson provided these words of wisdom: "planners need a working account of how power relationships define planning situations and how they support or threaten a democratic planning process" (p. 117).

**Understanding the Targeted Audience: Profile of Black Farmers**

Seevers et al. (1997) recommended that the design of generic educational programs targeting specific audiences should be avoided. Program planners should take special precaution in identifying the unique characteristics of their targeted audience; as well as their needs. According to Seevers et al. “educational programs will more effectively address the needs of individuals when designed with the specific audience in mind” (p. 102). In this case, the specific audience is the African American farmer.
Who is the African American farmer? A large percentage of the literature regarding African American farmers has been dedicated to answering this question. The biggest misconception surrounding African American farmers was centered on their social, economic, and cultural conditions. Researchers studying African American farmers concluded that most African American farmers were: (a) older, with lower educational levels than the national average for all farmers, (b) located in the southeastern portion of the United States and concentrated in areas that traditionally were economically depressed with few opportunities for economic growth, and (c) typically classified as small and limited-resource farmers (Beauford & Nelson, 1988; Dismukes et al., 1997; Jones, 1994; Koenig & Dodson, 1999; McLean-Meyinsse & Brown, Jr., 1994; Schor, 1996). A discussion of their characteristics is provided in the following sections. The characteristics described in the following paragraphs do not suggest that they were exclusive to African American farmers only; rather it simply identifies the characteristics of African American farmers and describes their plight without attempting to make any type of comparison.

Age & Education

Several studies found that the average age of the African American farmer was typically 65 or higher (Beauford & Nelson, 1988; Dismukes et al., 1997; Jones, 1994; Koenig & Dodson, 1999; McLean-Meyinsse & Brown, Jr, 1994; Schor, 1996; Zabawa, Siaway, & Baharanyi, 1990). Zabawa et al. (1990) completed a study on African American farmers located in rural Alabama. They interviewed 26 farmers
participating in the Small Farm Rehabilitation Project. This project was sponsored by the Farmers Home Administration and administered by Tuskegee University over an 18-month period. Their findings indicated that farmers participating in this project exhibited characteristics common to the average Black farmer, including being older and less educated. In his 1996 study, Schor supported the research findings of Zabawa et al. He reported that the average age for African American farmers in 1982 was 57 years, or 6 years above the national average for all farmers in the United States. Beauford and Nelson also concurred with these research findings. They discovered that Black farmers in general also "had inadequate human capital skills (particularly education and appropriate training for off-farm employment" (p. 100).

In analyzing the average age of African American farmers, an examination of the circumstances surrounding their advanced age is important. One of the major reasons why the majority of African American farmers were older was the fact that thousands of Black farmers left agriculture and the youth did not enter the field to replace the older farmers. Beauford and Nelson, (1988) and Dismukes et al., (1997) completed studies regarding the absence of young Blacks in agriculture. Beauford and Nelson (1988) referred to the absence of young Black farmers as one of the "major threats to Black agriculture" and "without a significant infusion of young Blacks into production agriculture, the population of Black farmers will continue to decrease and possibly diminish as a result of the normal process of attrition" (p. 116). Civil Rights Action Team (1997) reported that young Blacks were less likely to farm because they witnessed the struggles faced by their parents to obtain fair
treatment and their parents only received poor returns for their efforts (CRAT, p. 27). Young people who would like to farm and to continue the legacy, they were often faced with stumbling blocks such as limited financial opportunities (p. 27).

**Location and Economic/ Social Conditions**

According to the USDA National Agricultural Statistics (1992; 1997) and U.S. Department of Commerce Bureau of the Census (1987), over 90% of African Americans participating in farming reside in thirteen states spread across the Southeastern portion of the United States. Eleven of these states are located in the Black Belt region. The Black Belt region extends across an area that begins with Virginia and goes through the Carolinas, Georgia, Florida, and ends in Texas. This particular region consists of counties that have higher than average percentages of African Americans (Tackie, Baharanyi, Findlay, & Zabawa, 1998, p. 153).

The problems experienced within the rural South and across the Black Belt was paramount, ranging from excessive poverty and limited opportunities for economic growth to the loss of Black-owned farmland (Calhoun, Reeder, & Bagi, 2000). Though some progress was made, many of the same problems continued for African American farmers in the 21st century. An article by Gibbs (2001) described the economic progress experienced within the southern region as being “unevenly distributed across both places and people. The South is no longer ‘the Nation’s number one economic problem,’ as Franklin Roosevelt proclaimed. But its legacy of economic and social insularity left behind concentrations of high poverty, low levels of human capital, and limited opportunities to move up career and wage ladders” (p.
2). According to Gibbs, "Four of every five persistent-poverty counties, in which the poverty rate exceeded 20% continuously since 1960, are in the rural South" (p. 3). Black farmers typically are also concentrated in economically slow-growing counties that offer "few opportunities for off-farm employment ...and few amenities to attract industrial employers" (Beauford & Nelson, 1988, p. 100).

Gibbs (2001) wrote that "the rural south suffers the highest rate of adults without high school diplomas (38% in 1990), and the lowest rate of college graduates (14%) of any region..." (p. 4). Beaulieu, Barfield, and Stone (2001) supported this assessment of the rural south. They concluded that the rural south has made significant progress over the past decades, but "quality jobs requiring educated workers remain more a dream than a reality in the rural south" (p. 28).

Several explanations were provided regarding the status of the economic plight of African American farmers residing in the South. In their study of the social and economic conditions of Black farm households, Beauford and Nelson (1988) attributed the lower economic well-being of Black farmers to: (a) characteristics of Black farmers, (b) the structure of their farms, and (c) historical patterns of racism and discrimination rooted in slavery and the plantation system. In a more recent article, John Cromartie's study (as cited in Calhoun et al., 2000) suggested that the problems experienced in the Black Belt region are possibly the result of difficult adjustment from the "slave-based agrarian Southern economy to today's diverse and highly competitive global economy" (p. 20). Gilbert et al. (2001) suggested that the main reasons why many rural communities experienced excessively high levels of
poverty can be contributed to their loss of land and farm operations throughout the years.

**Loss of Black-Owned Land**

The loss of Black-owned land was a significant problem within the African American community (Schulman, Garrett, Luginbuhl, & Greene, 1985). Within a 15-year period from 1982-1997, African Americans lost 1.1 million acres of farmland (see Table 4). The loss of this land was the result of: (a) lack of technical and management assistance, (b) unreliable and unfair markets, (c) failure to pay property taxes, (d) non-participation in government programs, (f) racism, and (g) failure to write a will, which resulted in the land becoming heir property or sold through partition sales (Gilbert et al., 2001; Pennick, n.d.). The most compelling reason cited was the failure of Black farmers to leave wills. When a farmer failed to leave a will, the land could be deemed heir property. “The land is then divided among the surviving family. No individual held the clear title to the land; rather ownership rights could be divided among such an extensive network that heirs could actually be unaware of their ownership” (Schulman et al., p. 41). The controversy surrounding heir property was centered on the fact that “any individual heir can legally force a sale of the landholding, regardless of the wishes of other heirs. Any heir may also sell a share to non-family members without consulting other heirs” (Gilbert et al., p. 14). Issues also arose when coheirs failed to pay their property taxes, or could not agree on a
financial settlement or the division of the property (Schulman et al., p. 41). Partition sale could occur for all of the reasons cited above. When this occurs,

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"local lawyers and officials can purchase the dissident heir(s), interest in order to force a public auction of the entire disputed property. Such unscrupulous behavior is a contributing factor to Black land loss..." (p. 41).

**Understanding the Learning Process for Black Farmers**

An extensive amount of literature was available on the education of African Americans; however, written documentation on planning and designing nonformal educational programs for African American farmers was somewhat limited. Nonformal education is defined as "...learning opportunities that take place outside of formal educational settings that complement or supplement the needs of
underserved adults..." (Merriam & Caffarella, 1999, p. 28-29). Nonformal education is usually less structured, more flexible, and based on the needs of the targeted audience. Informal education is similar to nonformal education; however, this type of learning occurs in the learners’ natural settings (Merriam & Caffarella, p. 34).

Incorporating the Social Context into Program Planning

Some would argue that the development of nonformal and informal educational programs for African American farmers resembled that for farmers of other ethnicities. Leading researchers working with African Americans contradicted this argument and suggested that African Americans in this case, African American farmers, have special needs that are the result of the social, political, economic, and historical conditions that they faced (Beauford & Nelson, 1988; Crowe, Bryne, & Hale, 2001; Malach, 2000; McCray, 1994). The literature typically referred to this process as “incorporating the sociocultural context into program planning” (Axxin & Axxin, 1997; Boone, 1985; Guy, 1999; Merriam & Caffarella, 1999; Seevers et al., 1997).

What does “incorporating the sociocultural context into program planning” actually mean? What is involved in this process? This means understanding that race, age, gender, and the social, political, and economic environment are all factors that should contribute to the decision making process regarding the program’s content, identification of the targeted audience, what will be learned, and where and when this learning will occur (Merriam & Caffarella, 1999). According to Merriam and Caffarella, when planning educational programs, it is important to not only take
into consideration the needs of learners and how to facilitate their learning, but it is equally important that the program planner focuses on the sociocultural perspective of each learner. Boone (1985) supported the idea of planning programs from a sociocultural perspective. His main thesis was that “the first responsibility of the change agent and programmer, is to analyze the sociocultural context of the desired change, identify educational needs in that particular instance, and act in congruence with the supporting educational organization” (p. x).

The sociocultural context of learning closely resembles the idea of culturally relevant adult education. Guy (1999) wrote extensively about the importance of culturally relevant adult education. He described cultural relevant programs as those in which “adult educators strive to help learners who face oppression on a daily basis, take control of their lives” (p. 94). He envisioned that these learners would in turn become “stronger, confident, agents of change not only for themselves but for their families, their communities, and the country” (p. 94).

What does this mean for African American farmers? It means that programs will be administered in a manner that takes in consideration their declining numbers, their advanced age, and the economic and social problems of the regions in which they reside. It also means that these programs will be reflective of their individual needs and incorporate their ideas, beliefs, and values. Planners of educational programs for African American farmers should: (a) have a clear understanding of whom their targeted audience is, (b) have a clear understanding of the issues and problems that they are facing, (c) be able to design and implement appropriate educational strategies, and (d) effectively evaluate the program.
Individualizing the Learning Experience

The traditional learning format used by the Cooperative Extension Service often relied on the use of group meetings, farm demonstrations, farm field days, and publications to increase the knowledge base of farmers (Simon, 1990). “However, these methods did not always fit the life style, attitudes, educational levels, and financial constraints of small limited resource farmers” (Simon, p. 183). When working with African American farmers, studies showed that an alternative approach to learning needs to be implemented. The use of small farm professionals or one-on-one consultants proved to be successful in this environment (Petrzelka, Padgitt, & Wintersteen, 1999; Simon).

The small farm professional typically worked exclusively with several farmers who were located in several different counties. Based upon the farmers’ needs, several visits were made during the course of the month. The small farm professional engaged in a process where he or she assisted the farmer in identifying needs, establishing informal goals, and developing individualized learning plans to accomplish those goals. Learning occurred through one-on-one interactions with the small farm professional. This learning process was referred to as individualized learning. Individualized learning is based on the idea that adults have “diverse levels of education, experiences, and expectations and when given the opportunity most adults prefer to be in charge of their own learning” (Sisco & Hiemstra, 1991). Hiemstra and Sisco (1990) provided a description of the individualizing learning process:
The individualizing process is based on the belief that all people are capable of self-directed involvement in, personal commitment to, and responsibility for learning. More specifically, we believe that they are able to make choices regarding instructional approaches, educational resources, and evaluation techniques. (p. 6)

According to Maehl (2000), the individualized learning format respects the identity of farmers, acknowledges their experiences, facilitates their goals, and involves them in planning, directing, and evaluating learning. Potential Individualized learning opportunities may occur when the small farm professional receives a request from the farmer for assistance in: (a) completing a loan application, (b) establishing a record keeping system, (c) identifying alternative enterprises, or (d) identifying ways to improve the overall productivity of the farming operation.

Several projects experienced success in the use of small farm professionals. One particular case occurred with two different extension projects implemented by the Kentucky Cooperative Extension Service (Simon, 1990). The small farm professionals provided educational assistance to 30 small farmers. The findings indicated that that "by utilizing small farm professionals, many of the farmers doubled, tripled, or quadruped their annual income. The reports indicated that the original 30 farmers who graduated from the program, increased their gross farm incomes (cumulatively) by some $550,000" (p. 185).

The small farm professional also can be thought of as a change agent. Rogers (1995) defined a change agent as an "individual who influences clients' innovation-decisions in a direction deemed desirable by the change agency" (p. 335). In facilitating change, Rogers listed seven different roles of the change agent, including: (a) developing a need for change, (b) establishing an information-
exchange relationship, (c) diagnosing problems, (d) creating an intent in the client to change, (e) translating an intent to action, (f) stabilizing adoption and preventing discontinuance, and (g) achieving a terminal relationship.

To achieve some degree of success with farmers, both Rogers (1995) and Knox (as cited in Birkenholz, 1999) suggested several factors. Rogers indicated that success is highly dependent on the change agents’ ability to: (a) establish contact with the client, (b) establish good rapport and credibility, (c) make recommendations that are based on the client’s needs, and (d) express empathy and understanding of the client’s situation. In addition to the factors listed by Rogers, Knox (1980) also suggested that the small farm professional should possess both technical and people skills. He indicated that knowledge of the subject, of the learner, and of teaching and learning were essential (as cited in Birkenholz, 1999, p. 133).

**Evaluating the Program**

Within the last several decades, evaluation has become a field within itself. The evaluation of a social program is not a straightforward task. In reality it can be a multifaceted process that involves many different decisions, a variety of stakeholders, and a multitude of evaluational approaches as well as methodological techniques. This particular section defines and describes evaluation, analyzes the various approaches of evaluations, and offers strategies for planners and evaluators working with African American farmers.
Defining & Describing Evaluation

Leading evaluation theorists offered their perceptions of what evaluation should entail. Patton (1997), who has gained recognition for his research on utilization-focused evaluation, defined evaluation as a process that involves "... the systematic collection of information about the activities, characteristics, and outcomes of programs to make judgments about the program, improve program effectiveness, and/or inform decisions about future programming" (p. 23). Weiss (1998) also described evaluation as being systematic. She indicated that it is "... a systematic assessment of the operation and/or outcomes of a program or policy, compared to a set of explicit or implicit standards, as a means of contributing to the improvement of the program or policy" (p. 4). Worthen, Sanders, and Fitzpatrick (1997) added to Weiss and Patton; however, they included terms such as criteria, worth, and merit. According to these authors, evaluation is "... the identification, clarification, and application of defensible criteria to determine an evaluation object's value (worth or merit), quality, utility, effectiveness, or significance in relation to those criteria" (p. 5).

The commonalities in these definitions are based upon the ideas of collecting data or evidence based upon some pre-established criteria or guidelines with the sole intention of determining if the program is effective or ineffective. The criteria or guidelines can originate from a variety of sources; however, the most common source is the program's official goal or objective statement (Weiss, 1998, p. 5). Evidence, on the other hand, can be generated through document analysis, interviews with program participants, staff members, etc. The evaluator can obtain
evidence by seeking answers to the following questions: (a) how is the program being conducted, (b) what is it actually doing, and (c) how well is it following the guidelines that were set originally?

Evaluation also has been referred to as a separate form of research that utilizes a wide array of methodological techniques and procedures (Weiss, 1998).

According to Weiss:

Evaluation is sometimes regarded as a lower order of research, particularly in academic circles, than basic or pure research. Evaluators are sometimes seen as the drones of the research fraternity, drudging away on dull issues and compromising their integrity out in the corrupt world. But as any working evaluator will fervently tell you, evaluation calls for a higher level of skills than research that is designed and executed under the researcher's control. It takes skill to make research simultaneously rigorous and useful when it is coping with the complexities of real people in real programs run by real organizations, and it takes some guts. (p. 18)

Gall, Borg, and Gall (1996) suggested an alternative view regarding evaluation as a separate form of research. Gall et al. indicated that although evaluation and traditional research share some commonalities, major differences exist. The evaluation of a program typically results from a need to make a decision regarding a policy, management, program, or political strategy, completed for a specific purpose, and the findings usually are not generalized to other cases, and involve making judgments regarding the value of that particular program or policy (p. 681-682).
Analyzing the Various Forms and Types of Evaluation

Several different forms or approaches can be utilized in the completion of evaluational research; however, the focus or type of evaluation should be determined by: (a) the type of program in question, (b) the answers that the evaluator and major stakeholders are seeking, (c) the desires of the targeted audience, and (d) how the findings will be used (Patton, 1997; Weiss, 1998). Traditionally, evaluations have focused exclusively on assessing the outcomes or impact of a particular program or policy. Patton and Weiss have suggested that the focus of an evaluation should extend beyond identifying the specific outcomes or impact that the program may or may not have had. Limiting the focus of the evaluation to outcomes restricts its effectiveness and yields results that provide little information to guide action. “Simply learning that outcomes were high or low doesn’t tell decision makers much about what to do” (Patton, p. 199). It is important to understand not only if the program is effective or ineffective; but also equally to understand why the program was effective or ineffective. It is also important to have a solid description of the actual program and to understand what was effective or ineffective (Patton; Weiss).

An evaluation that pursues this line of inquiry is referred to as implementation evaluation. Implementation evaluation “…involves finding out what actually is happening in the program, what does the program consist of, what are the program’s key characteristics, what’s working and what’s not working, and exactly what is the program (Patton, 1997, p. 196). Process evaluation is one of several different types of implementation evaluation. “Process evaluation focuses on the internal dynamics
and actual operations of the program and attempts to understand its strengths and weaknesses...Process evaluations search for explanations of the successes, failures, and changes of a program" (p. 206). The perceptions of people close to the program are a key element in process evaluation. Process evaluation provides answers to questions such as: (a) what did the program do, (b) how well did the program staff do it, (c) what is happening and why, (d) how do the parts of the program fit together, and (e) how did the participants experience the program (Patton).

**Strategies for Evaluating Programs**

The goal of most evaluators is to produce a tangible document that provides a detailed description of the program and outlines specific impacts or outcomes of the program. The achievement of this goal starts in the initial stages of program evaluation. It begins when the evaluator is conceptualizing the initial steps in the completion of the evaluation. During this stage, the evaluator should provide answers to the following questions: What is the purpose of this evaluation? Who are the primary audiences? What are the needs and concerns of the major stakeholders? What questions are they seeking answers to? and How will this evaluation be used? (Patton, 1997; Weiss, 1998). In addition to seeking answers to those questions, it is also essential that the evaluator have a complete and clear understanding of the program in question. For the external evaluator, he or she must discover "the reality of the program rather than its illusion. If he or she accepts the description given in the application for funds or in publicity releases, he or she may
evaluate a phantom program" (Weiss, p. 49). Both Patton and Weiss have stressed the idea that in reality, programs exhibit characteristics that are significantly different from the official program descriptions. An evaluator cannot assume that what is written equals the program.

Summary

The overall purpose of Chapter II was to highlight specific events that have occurred in U.S. agriculture and the impact that these events had on African American farmers. This chapter began with a historical review of the role of Blacks in United States agriculture from 1619-1880. Blacks were brought to the United States and forced into slavery for almost three hundred years. During this time, Blacks were forced to participate in agricultural activities. In 1865, President Abraham Lincoln emancipated 4 million Negro slaves. After emancipation, the old plantation system was abolished and replaced with the sharecropping system. Blacks continued to farm under the sharecropping system. Section two of this chapter examined agricultural extension education at 1890 land-grant institutions. The 1890 land-grant institutions were established as a result of the second Morrill Act. The Smith-Lever Act of 1914 created agricultural extension education programs at these institutions. The findings indicated that major disparities exited between the Black and White land-grant institutions. These disparities could be observed in the disbursement of funds. Black land-grant institutions did not received formula funding for their extension programs until 1972. Section three of this study examined discrimination
in U.S. agriculture. The findings indicated that discrimination in U.S. agriculture is a major problem. Discrimination have significantly impacted the progress of minority farmers. An examination of the complexities involved in designing, implementing, and evaluating agricultural extension education programs was the focus of the last three sections of Chapter II.
CHAPTER III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The overall goal of this study was to provide an analysis of the implementation process of selected 2501 projects. Specifically, this study examined the 2501 Program within the context of program planning, implementation evaluation, and agricultural extension education. In addressing this goal, the following research questions were developed:

- What are the salient features or key characteristics of selected small farm projects?
- What specific activities were the 2501 projects engaged in?
- To what extent was the 2501 Program implemented as planned and what factors may have impeded its successful implementation?
- What was the relationship between selected small farm projects and their major stakeholders/decision makers?
- Who benefited from the 2501 Program and in what ways?
- What was the impact of the 2501 projects?
- What does the future hold for the 2501 Program?

This avenue of inquiry dictated that the researcher select a methodological approach that possessed the following features:

- Allow for an in-depth exploration of the 2501 Program within its natural settings and within a real-world context; while at the same time capturing the essence of the program through the voices of those who have participated directly in its implementation;
• Allow for the utilization of words and thick descriptions in providing explanations of what has happened, why it has happened, and the factors that have contributed to making the 2501 Program work or fail to work;
• Allow for the incorporation of an emergent research design that is flexible in nature, but seeks to illuminate the influence of time on issues pertaining to deadlines, change in legislators, or cessation of funding.

The qualitative research methodology approach exhibited each of these features and, therefore, was selected as the methodological approach for this study.

This chapter is divided into six separate sections. It begins with a discussion of qualitative research and the case study method. Section two provides a brief summary and explanation of the pilot study. Section three outlines how the cases were selected. Sections four and five discuss the techniques used to collect and analyze the data. Section six outlines specific strategies used to ensure the validity and trustworthiness of the data.

**Qualitative Research Methodology**

There are numerous misconceptions surrounding qualitative research. Qualitative research is frequently misunderstood; and is sometimes viewed as a data collection technique instead of as a separate form of research (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Strauss and Corbin cited an example in which researchers attempted to utilize the qualitative methodological approach by collecting data through the use of interviews but coded that same data in a manner that allowed for
statistical analysis. Strauss and Corbin indicated that this particular method is not necessarily qualitative research but can be viewed as "quantifying qualitative data". This particular research study avoids the utilization of qualitative research in that manner. Instead, it focuses on "… a nonmathematical process of interpretation that seeks to discover concepts and relationships in raw data" (p. 11). The beauty of qualitative research, or naturalistic inquiry, is that it allows for the preservation of "…real life context in which events occur … with a minimum amount of intrusion and absence of any attempts to control or manipulate variables" (Issac & William, 1995, p. 219).

Qualitative research involves the utilization of words and thick descriptions to understand and examine a phenomenon (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998; Issac & William, 1995; Merriam, 1998). This approach provides an opportunity in which the voices of the participants can be heard through their accounts and interpretations of a situation. The researcher becomes immersed in the field and allows the data to lead him or her on a search for the truth as perceived by the participants. Denzin and Lincoln captured the essence of qualitative research by defining it as being

...multimethod in focus, involving an interpretive, naturalistic approach to its subject matter. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them. Qualitative research involves the studied use and collection of a variety of empirical materials-case study, personal experience, introspective, life story, interview, observational, historical, interactional, and visual texts that describe routine and problematic moments and meanings in individuals' lives. (p. 3)
According to Merriam (1998), there are five different types of qualitative research: basic or generic qualitative study, ethnography, phenomenology, grounded theory, and case study. The case study method was selected for this study. Yin (1994) defined the case study method as "... an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident" (p. 13). Merriam agreed with Yin's definition of the case study method; however, she added:

A case study design is employed to gain an in-depth understanding of the situation and meaning for those involved. The interest is in process rather than outcomes, in context rather than a specific variable, in discovery rather than confirmation. Insights gleaned from case studies can directly influence policy, practice, and future research. (p. 19)

**Pilot Study**

"Until we enter the field, we do not know what questions to ask or how to ask them. In other words, the preconceived image we have of the settings and people we intend to study may be naïve, misleading, or downright false" (Taylor & Bogdan, 1998, p. 25).

Prior to the selection of cases and the collection of data, several significant events occurred. Among these events was the completion of a pilot study. According to Gall et al. (1996,) "a pilot study involves small-scale testing of the procedures that you plan to use in the main study, and revising the procedures based on what the testing reveals" (p. 65). Yin (1994) also suggested that the completion of a pilot study prior to the official collection of data may assist the researcher in developing relevant lines of questions and clarifying the research design.
The pilot study was completed from December 3-5, 2000 at the 58th Annual Professional Agricultural Workers Conference (PAWC) at Tuskegee University in Tuskegee, Alabama. The overall goal or purpose of the Professional Agricultural Workers Conference was to provide a forum in which agricultural practitioners could discuss, analyze, and evaluate issues pertaining to agricultural and rural development as it relates to historically Black universities and rural communities. Representatives from 1890 land-grant institutions and from 2501 small farm projects were in attendance at the 58th Annual PAWC.

There were no specific guidelines or procedures followed in the completion of the pilot study. It was a very informal process that allowed for an emergent design. The researcher served in the capacity as a participant/observer. The informal goals of the pilot study included:

- gaining additional knowledge and information about the 2501 Program through the use of informal unstructured interviews with project staff attending the conference,
- identifying the key issues, concerns, and problems facing individual small farm projects,
- identifying and establishing rapport with key informants, and
- identifying significant areas of inquiry that would assist the researcher in developing relevant lines of questions and possibly providing some conceptual clarification of the research design.

It should be noted that the pilot study was conducted at a very critical time for the 2501 Program. The five-year funding cycle ended on September 30, 2000, three
months prior to the conference. At the time of the conference, the request for proposal (RFP) had not been completed. The RFP would allow the individual projects to apply for additional funds. Several, if not all, of the small farm projects were operating without any funds from the 2501 Program.

One of the major sessions during the 58th Annual PAWC was devoted to addressing the issue of the status of the RFP and the future of the 2501 Program. This particular session provided an opportunity for four different small farm projects to present information regarding the impact that their 2501 Program was having on rural communities in their targeted areas. The moderators for this session were representatives from the National Office of Outreach.

The opportunity to attend this conference and to witness this particular session proved to be an invaluable experience for the researcher. The researcher was able to: (a) obtain an insider's view of the issues and problems facing the 2501 Program, (b) increase her understanding of the 2501 Program, (c) establish valuable contacts who would serve later as participants in the study, and (d) gain the trust of key informants. Creswell (1998) referred to this process as gaining access to the gatekeepers. “The gatekeeper is an individual who is a member of or has insider status with a cultural group” (p. 117).

Selection of Cases

The selection of cases in qualitative research is remarkably different from the selection of cases in quantitative research. The technique used in qualitative
research is referred to as purposeful sampling (McMillian & Schumacher, 1997). Purposeful sampling involves the selection of cases or samples that are “likely to be informational rich with respect to the purposes of the study” (Gall et al., 1996, p. 218). Purposeful sampling typically is used when “one wants to understand something about those cases without needing or desiring to generalize to all such cases” (McMillian & Schumacher). The logic behind purposeful sampling is that a “few cases studied in depth yield many insights about a topic” (McMillian & Schumacher).

The sample size, or number of cases to include, in a qualitative study is highly dependent on the purpose of the study, the research problem, the data collection techniques used, and the availability of informational rich cases (McMillian & Schumacher, 1997). According to Erlandson, Harris, Skipper, and Allen (1993), “there are no rules for sample size. In qualitative research one is looking more for quality than quantity, more for information richness than information volume” (p. 83-84). There is no set procedure to follow or no magic number of cases that should be included in a study. McMillian and Schumacher indicated that the sample size can “…range from n=1 to n=40 or more” (p. 401).

The cases for this research study were selected initially based on the following criteria:

- The small farm project had to have obtained a 2501 grant during 1994-2000.
- The recipient of the 2501 grant had to be associated with an 1890 land grant university or college or community-based organization.
• It was essential that the 2501 grant recipients have an extensive history and background of providing agricultural extension educational and outreach assistance to African American farmers.

• It also was essential that the project staff were available to meet during June 1 – July 30, 2001.

Using a list obtained from the National Office of Outreach, 17 small farm projects were identified. Each of the small farm projects represented ideal candidates for study; however, only six were selected due to time and financial constraints. The six small farm projects were selected using maximum variation purposeful sampling techniques. Gall et al. (1996) indicated that "maximum variation sampling involves the selection of cases that illustrate the range of variation in the phenomena to be studied" (p. 233). The small farm projects that were selected included: South Carolina State University, Fort Valley State University, Federation of Southern Cooperatives/Land Assistance Fund, Tuskegee University, Alcorn State University, and Lincoln University. The rationale for the selection of each of the six small farm projects is explained below:

• South Carolina State University is located in Orangeburg, South Carolina. The South Carolina State University small farm project was classified as being unique or special, because it is located in one of several states that has not experienced an increase in the number of African American farmers (see Table 5).
Table 5. Black Farmers, 1982-1997 by State (Southern)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
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<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alabama</td>
<td>2,759</td>
<td>1,828</td>
<td>1,381</td>
<td>1,467</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Georgia</td>
<td>2,068</td>
<td>1,253</td>
<td>1,080</td>
<td>1,175</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mississippi</td>
<td>4,802</td>
<td>3,016</td>
<td>2,480</td>
<td>2,145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Carolina</td>
<td>3,147</td>
<td>2,015</td>
<td>1,756</td>
<td>1,412</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


- Fort Valley State University small farm project was chosen because it is located in one of five states (Georgia) that have witnessed an increase in the number of Black farmers (see Table 5).

- The Federation of Southern Cooperatives is a Community-Based Organization. This organization was selected for a case study because of its nongovernmental organizational or community-based status.

- Tuskegee University is the only private land-grant university participating in the 2501 Program. It was selected based upon its private land-grant status.

- Alcorn State University was also selected because it is one of several states (Mississippi) that have not witnessed an increase in the number of African American farmers (see Table 5). Alcorn State University is located in Mississippi, an area that has been plagued by discrimination, poverty, and limited opportunities for economic advancement.

- Lincoln University was selected because it has the only 1890 small farm project in the Midwest. Lincoln University is located in Jefferson City, Missouri.
Data Collection Techniques

The official collection of data, or fieldwork, extended over a two-month period, from June 1, 2001 – July 30, 2001. Prior to the researcher entering the field, initial contact or introductory letters were mailed to representatives from each of the six small farm projects during April. The introductory letters outlined the goals and objectives of the study, provided a detailed explanation of how and when the study would be conducted, and requested a one-on-one interview with the project staff as well as, an opportunity to complete a farm visit. A copy of this letter is provided in Appendix A. Approximately two weeks after the letters were mailed, the researcher contacted each of the small farm representatives by phone to schedule an office and farm visit. Representatives from each of the five schools and the community based organization agreed to participate in the study. An appointment was scheduled at that time.

The following techniques were used to collect the data: qualitative interviews, participant observations, and document analysis. These three data collection techniques were selected because of their usefulness in eliciting data that would provide a holistic understanding of the research phenomena, in this case the 2501 Program.

Qualitative Interviews

Erlandson et al. (1993) indicated that interviews are appropriate techniques for qualitative data collection because interviews
...allow the researcher and responder to move back and forth in time; to
reconstruct the past, interpret the present, and predict the future. Interviews
also help the researcher to understand and put into larger context the
interpersonal, social, and cultural aspects of the environment. (p. 85).

The primary data collection technique employed in this study was the use of
one-on-one semi-structured interviews. Gall et al. (1996) defined semi-structured
interviews as “a type of interview in which the interviewer asks a series of structured
questions and then probes more deeply with open-ended questions to obtain
additional information.

Twenty interviews were completed. Four of the 20 interviews were conducted
with project directors. An additional seven interviews were completed with
assistant/associate project directors or project coordinators. Four interviews were
conducted with small farm professionals or specialists. In addition, 12 different visits
were made to farms participating in Fort Valley State, South Carolina State, and
Lincoln Universities’ small farm projects. Five of the 12 farm visits resulted in the
completion of one-on-one interviews with farmers.

The interviews with the project staff were conducted at each of the six
different projects. The projects were located in five different states, including: South
Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, and Missouri. The first field visit was
completed at South Carolina State University. Fort Valley State University and the
Federation of Southern Cooperatives are both located in Georgia. Visits to these two
small farm projects were made second and third, respectively. Tuskegee University,
located in Tuskegee, Alabama, was the fourth project visited. The last two on-site
visits were conducted at Alcorn State University and Lincoln University. They are located in Mississippi and Missouri, respectively.

Each interview was tape-recorded. The interview began with the researcher providing a detailed explanation of the study to the participants. Informed written consent then was obtained from each participant. The researcher also requested and obtained permission from each of the representatives to use the project names and the university that it was associated with in the final report of this study. Participants were assured that their individual names would not be used. A pseudonym would be used in place of the participants' names when direct quotations were given. A copy of the interview guide is available in Appendix B.

**Participant-Observer**

In qualitative research, the researcher is usually the primary instrument for data collection. The researcher can take on several different roles, including that of participant-observer. According to Gall et al. (1996), the role of the participant-observer is to observe the phenomenon in naturally occurring situations while maintaining detailed field notes or a journal (McMillan & Schumacher, 1997). As a participant-observer, the researcher also may interact with individuals to establish a meaningful identity (Gall et al., 1996). The utilization of the participant-observer technique was incorporated into the research design. The researcher participated in the 2001 Natural Resources and Agricultural Workshop in Education, Outreach, and Technology Transfer in Perry, Georgia. This conference was sponsored by the National Office of Outreach and was hosted by three of the participating small farm
projects, including Alcorn State University, Fort Valley State University, and Tuskegee University.

**Document Analysis**

The third and final data collection technique used in this study was document analysis. The researcher obtained several documents during the data collection phase. These documents were given to the researcher by the small farm project staff. Examples of these documents include: (a) progress reports, (b) evaluation reports, (c) newspaper articles, (d) conference proceedings, (e) a thesis that was focused on the 2501 Program, (f) articles written by project staff, (g) publications produced and released by the six small farm projects, (h) publications produced by the Farm Service Agency, and (i) PowerPoint presentations. Each of these documents assisted the researcher in developing a thorough understanding of the services provided by 2501 projects and the impact that the small farm project has had on rural communities.

**Data Analysis**

The analysis of qualitative data is a tedious and time-consuming process that is neither “…structured, static, or rigid” (Strauss & Corbin). In contrary, the process is “…free flowing and creative, one in which analysts move quickly back and forth between types of coding, using analytic techniques and procedures freely and in response to the analytic task” (Strauss & Corbin, p. 58). The literature is abundant
regarding different techniques for analyzing qualitative data. Data analysis should occur in two different phases: (1) simultaneously with data collection while in the field and (2) after all data have been collected (Erlandson et al., 1993; Merriam, 1998, Strauss & Corbin; Weiss, 1994). The researcher implemented a similar protocol in the analysis of the research data.

**Initial Data Analysis**

The initial analysis of the data occurred in four different phases. Phase one consisted of the actual transcribing of each of the interview tapes. Each tape was transcribed within two or three days after completion of the interview. Upon completion of each of the transcriptions the data were analyzed. The goal at that particular point was to code the data, discover tentative themes, and establish basic categories. The process of coding data, theme development, and category construction can be classified as phase two. According to Merriam (1998), the coding process involves assigning some type of “shorthand designation to various aspects of your data so that you can easily retrieve specific pieces of data” (p. 164). The key to coding qualitative data successfully lies in the ability of the researcher to link what the respondent says or what the document reveals to the concepts and categories that appear in the report (Weiss, 1994). Category construction involves a systematic process in which the research identifies potential categories based upon the emerging themes. This process should be guided by the “study’s purpose, the investigator’s orientation and knowledge, and the meanings made explicit by the
participants themselves” (Merriam, p. 179). This process was repeated until all transcriptions had been reviewed.

Phase three of the initial analysis process involved the researcher maintaining detailed field notes and a research journal. The field log and research journal outlined the researcher’s preliminary findings, reactions, reflections, and thoughts concerning potential avenues of inquiry. An analysis of the field logs and research journal was also accomplished.

Phase four of the initial data analysis process involved a comparative analysis of each of the transcriptions, field log, and research journal. Categories that exhibited similar themes were grouped together and placed under a general heading (Merriam, 1998).

Secondary Data Analysis

The second phase of data analysis occurred outside of the field and upon completion of all data collection. This analysis occurred after the official period for data collection had ended. Merriam (1998) and Weiss (1994) have suggested that two different methods can be used at this stage. Merriam referred to this process as within-case analysis and cross-case analysis. Weiss used a different terminology to describe similar concepts. He referred to the analysis process as issue-focused or case-focused.

The within-case or case-focused technique treats each “case as a comprehensive case in and of itself” (Merriam, 1998, p. 194). Data about each case are analyzed and presented on an individual basis. The cross-case, or issue-
focused, analysis “...seeks to build abstractions across cases” (p. 195). According to Yin (1994), the goal of cross-case, or issue-focused analysis is to “...build general explanations that fit each of the individual cases, even though the cases will vary in details” (p. 112).

This particular study utilized both forms of analysis. The six individual small farm projects were analyzed initially on a project basis. The analysis was focused on providing a detailed description of each project. Cross-case, or issue-focused, analysis allowed the researcher to examine the data from a program perspective. This allowed the researcher to examine the overall internal dynamics of the program and make recommendations concerning future agricultural and extension educational programs targeting African American farmers.

**Strategies to Enhance Design Validity & Trustworthiness**

Several different strategies were used to ensure the validity and trustworthiness of the research design, including mechanically recorded data, member checking, triangulation, purposive sampling, and maintaining a reflective journal.

**Mechanically Recorded Data and Member Checking**

According to McMillian and Schumacher (1997), both mechanically recorded data and member checking can be employed to enhance validity. Mechanically recorded data can include the use of tape recorders, photographs, or videotapes
Each interview in this study was tape-recorded. McMillian and Schumacher defined member checking as a process in which the researcher "checks informally with participants for accuracy during data collection" (p. 405). The process of member checking was incorporated into the research design. The researcher checked with each participant during the interview to ensure the accuracy of the data. Each participant also was provided with an opportunity to review the final draft of the research report.

**Triangulation, Purposive Sampling, and Reflective Journals**

Erlandson et al. (1993) suggested that triangulation, purposive sampling, and maintaining a reflective journal also can be used to enhance the research design and ensure the validity and trustworthiness of the data. According to Erlandson et al., triangulation involves the incorporation of several different data collection techniques. Triangulation is used as a means to ensure that each source will yield additional information about the same events and relationships. This study was based on an analysis of six different small farm projects using three different data collection techniques: interviews, participant observations, and document analysis.

Purposive sampling also has been regarded as a technique for establishing trustworthiness. There are several different types of purposive sampling, this research utilized the maximum variation technique. This technique allows for an emergent design and emerging hypotheses to be developed (Erlandson, 1993, p. 161). The maintenance of journals has also been recommended as a strategy for ensuring the trustworthiness of data. The reflective journal can be used by the
researcher to record the researcher's reflections, reactions, and thoughts, as well as to record information regarding the researcher's schedule and logistics (Erlandson et al.).
CHAPTER IV. PROFILES OF THE SMALL FARM PROJECTS

Chapter IV is devoted exclusively to providing a detailed description of the six participating small farm projects within the following elements: (a) description of the project's specific goals and objectives, (b) description of the targeted audience, (c) description of the project staff, and (d) description of the targeted clients. There were six small farm projects participating in this study: Federation of Southern Cooperatives/Land Assistance Fund, Tuskegee University, Fort Valley State University, South Carolina State University, Alcorn State University, and Lincoln University. The primary targeted audience for each of the six small farm projects was African American farmers. Each of the profiles presented in this chapter will assist the researcher in obtaining a clear and concise understanding of the 2501 Program.

Federation of Southern Cooperatives/Land Assistance Fund

The Federation of Southern Cooperatives/Land Assistance Fund (FSC/LAF) is a Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) that has been in existence since 1967. The headquarters for this NGO is located in Eastpoint, Georgia; however, it provides rural development assistance to communities located in the entire southeastern portion of the United States. This organization is offers self-help economic opportunities and hope for low-income communities across the entire southeastern portion of the United States.
Description of the Goals/Objectives

The goal of FSC/LAF small farm project is to assist participants in increasing their on-farm incomes through the implementation of sound farm management practices. In addition, this project also:

- provides socially disadvantaged participants with up to date information on funding and land availability;
- provides educational opportunities for the participants to increase their knowledge of the newest farm technology, management techniques and budget preparation; and
- trains participants on the best use of land and alternative markets and market practices (Small Farmers Outreach Training & Technical Assistance Program Directory, n.d.).

Description of Targeted Area

FSC/LAF small farm (2501) project is concentrated in four states: Alabama, Georgia, Mississippi, and South Carolina. The FSC/LAF targeted area for the small farm project covers approximately 53 different counties (see Table 6).

Description of Project Staff

At the time of the interview the project staff consisted of a project administrator and four agricultural specialists. The agricultural specialists were located in each of the targeted states. Two were providing services to farmers in
Table 6. Federation of Southern Cooperatives/Land Assistance Fund Targeted Area

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>States</th>
<th>Counties</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alabama</td>
<td>Autauga, Lowndes, Butler, Monroe, Clarke, Choctaw, Sumter, Pickens, Greene, Marengo, Wilcox, Dallas, Hale &amp; Perry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Georgia</td>
<td>Dooly, Worth, Baker, Seminole, Calhoun, Lee, Early, Mitchell, Grady, Schley, Decatur, Thomas, Terrell, Macon, Brooks, Sumter, Houston, &amp; Lowndes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mississippi</td>
<td>Marshall, Benton, Lafayette, Jefferson Davis, Marion, Forrest, &amp; Perry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Carolina</td>
<td>Clarendon, Dillon, Marion, Lee, Williamsburgh, Florence, Orangeburg, Sumter, Charleston, Horry, Darlington, Berkely, &amp; Beaufort</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Federation of Southern Cooperatives/Land Assistance Fund Small Farmers Outreach Training and Technical Assistance Project Summary, n.d.

Georgia, one was working primarily in South Carolina, and the last agricultural specialist was working exclusively in Mississippi.

Description of Targeted Clients

FSC/LAF's small farm project provided direct assistance to approximately two hundred clients; however, they were able to reach over 2,000 individuals through their outreach activities. The farmers participating in FSC/LAF's small farm project were selected from a list provided by the Farm Service Agency. This particular group of farmers had experienced difficulties in meeting their financial obligations to FSA and other lenders (Federation of Southern Cooperatives/Land Assistance Fund Small Farmers Outreach Training and Technical Assistance Project Summary, n.d., p. 4).
Forty percent of their clients were between the ages of 31 and 50. Thirty-two percent were between the ages of 51 and 65. The remainder, 22% were over 66 years of age (FSC/LAF, project summary, n.d., p. 4). According to the FSC/LAF’s 1999-2000 Annual Report, “95% of the farmers in the outreach program are African American males, 5% are African American females, and 1% are African American youth. A large percentage of the farmers participating in FSC/LAF had completed high school or had gone beyond elementary school (74%). These farmers were exclusively engaged in crop production (56%) or doing a combination of both crop and livestock production (26%). The biggest obstacles confronting farmers in the FSC/LAF’s project was their inability to obtain adequate credit and technical assistance. These farmers also needed assistance in locating and developing suitable markets.

**Tuskegee University**

Tuskegee University is located in rural Macon County, Alabama. Even though this is a private university, Tuskegee receives federal funds as a component of the 1890 land-grant system. “On March 1, 1993, Tuskegee University entered into a cooperative agreement with USDA/Rural Economic and Community Development Service (RECD, formerly USDA/Farmers Home Administration) creating the Small Farmer Outreach Training and Technical Assistance Project” (Tuskegee University Small Farmers Outreach Training and Technical Assistance Project Progress
In January of 1994, Tuskegee University small farm project began servicing farmers in the BlackBelt Region of south central Alabama.

**Description of the Goals/Objectives**

The overall focus of the Tuskegee Small Farm project is to reverse the decline of minority farmers and improve the quality of life for residents in south-central Alabama. Specifically, this project focuses on:

- providing intensive training and management assistance to small-scale and limited resource farmers,
- improving the farm income and economic well-being of borrowers and farmers by increasing their production and management skills,
- developing and implementing outreach programs in order that eligible farmers may acquire farm ownership and operating loans,
- developing and enhancing business and marketing skills of selected borrowers,
- developing the financial documentation of the farm business to the point where the borrower can graduate to a commercial lender, and
- assisting the participants in utilizing the services of farm and business agencies that are available through existing USDA offices and other institutions (Tuskegee University Small Farmers Outreach Training and Technical Assistance Project Progress Report, 1997).
Description of Targeted Area

Tuskegee University's small farm project is located on the campus of Tuskegee University in Alabama. Initially services were provided to twelve primary counties including: Greene, Hale, Perry, Dallas, Sumter, Marengo, Wilcox, Lowndes, Montgomery, Macon, Bullock, and Barbour. Due to an increase in demand for their services, the Tuskegee project expanded to include several adjacent counties: Choctow, Clarke, Monroe, Butler, Crenshaw, Pike, Henry, Houston, Russell, Lee, Elmore, and Autauga (Tuskegee University Small Farmers Outreach Training and Technical Assistance Project Progress Report, 1997). In total, the project covers 26 counties in south central Alabama.

Description of Project Staff

The staff of the Tuskegee Project was representative of other small farm projects. At the time of the interview, the staff consisted of a project director, associate director, three farm management specialists, and an administrative assistant. The farm management specialists work directly with the farmers. Each farm management specialists were providing services in one of the following areas: (a) east Alabama, (b) central Alabama, and (c) west Alabama. The farm management specialists were based out of their home communities.

Description of Targeted Clients

According to the 1997 Progress Report, there were 263 farmers participating in the Tuskegee Small Farm Project: 234 African Americans, 28 Caucasians, and 1
Native American. The participants ranged in age from 10 to 80. The farmers in this project were representative of most African American farmers. They were older (average age of the participant was 50), had low incomes, and limited education (33% had less than 11 years of formal education, 58% were high school graduates, and 9% had attended college). The farmers in the BlackBelt region of Alabama faced a myriad of problems including undeveloped management skills and inadequate knowledge of key production and management practices that were essential in order to optimize farm profits (Tuskegee University Small Farmers Outreach Training and Technical Assistance Project Progress Report, 1997).

**Fort Valley State University**

Fort Valley State University (FVSU) was founded in 1895 and is located in the Peach Belt region of Georgia. On November 18, 1992, FVSU Cooperative Extension Program entered into a cooperative agreement with USDA/Farmers Home Administration. This agreement created the Small Farmers Outreach Training and Technical Assistance Project on the campus of Fort Valley State University.

**Description of the Goals/Objectives**

FVSU small farm project is focused on ensuring the economic sustainability of socially disadvantaged farmers. Their specific goals include:

- moving as many financially marginal/socially disadvantaged farmers to stable profitability.
• developing educational tools and programs to assist those farmers in remaining current as the economy and farm programs change.

• training farmers to analyze opportunities for enhancing their profitability through non-traditional farm or non-farm enterprise.

• analyzing and identifying structural impediments that have led to the current production problems faced by African American producers (Fort Valley State University Small Farmers Outreach Training and Technical Assistance Project Summary, 1999).

Description of Targeted Area

FVSU’s small farm project covers 23 counties in Georgia. Originally, this project was designed to target 15 counties. The project expanded to include seven additional counties. FVSU’s small farm project provides services to socially disadvantaged farmers residing in the following counties: Berrien, Bleckley, Bulloch, Burke, Candler, Dodge, Emanuel, Evans, Irwin, Laurens, Liberty, Long, Jeff Davis, Jefferson, Jenkins, Pulaski, Screven, Tattnall, Telfair, Toombs, Treutlen, Wheeler, and Wilcox.

Description of Project Staff

The project staff consists of a project director, project coordinator, and three county agents. The staff of FVSU’s small farm project were diverse, well educated, and had a variety of experiences. The project director described the staff members as being well qualified. The project director indicated:
Our coordinator has an agricultural economics background. He grew up in the area. He understands and identifies with the problems that the farmers are facing. The agents have excellent experience and research skills. They are very receptive of seeking outside training that is going to benefit farmers in their area. The bottom line is that they are very open-minded. One of the agents brings experience from the old Farmers Home Administration. Another agent has a long history with extension. They work together. We are talking about a network of agents, which really add to the program. We have really gotten more than our money worth in human resources (FVSU Project Director, personal communication, June 2001).

Description of Targeted Clients

The 1999 Progress Report for FVSU indicated that during the year of 1999 there were 72 farmers participating in their comprehensive training programs. Fifty of these farmers were borrowers and the remaining 22 were non-borrowers. The average age of the farmers participating in the FVSU's small farm project was 47. Farmers between the ages of 36 and 50 accounted for 35% of the participating farmers. Twenty percent of the participating farmers were between the ages of 36 to 50 and 20 to 35 (Fort Valley State University Small Farmers Outreach Training and Technical Assistance Project Summary, 1999). The majority of the farmers participating in FVSU's small farm project had completed high school (46%). Thirty-five percent had completed College/technical School or had attended. The remaining 19 % of the participating farmers had less than a high school diploma (Fort Valley State University Small Farmers Outreach Training and Technical Assistance Project Summary, 1999).
The farmers in this area faced the traditional problems faced by most African Americans farmers including lack of access to credit, low commodity prices, and insufficient markets. According to the project staff,

One of the barriers that farmers inside our program face is obtaining credit and understanding their credit to the point of knowing what you can and cannot do. If their credit is to the point where it is not good or looked upon as not being positive to obtain a loan; then we work with that particular farmer to clear those problems up and get the farmer to the point where they can borrow some money. We also have a lot of older farmers. Their educational level isn't what it would be for some of the younger farmers today. You have some farmers who have a third or fourth grade education. (FVSU project staff, personal communication, June 2001)

South Carolina State University

South Carolina State University (SCSU) is located in Orangeburg, South Carolina. Headquarters for SCSU's small farm project is located in the Harry E. Daniels Human Development Center. Camp Harry Daniels as it is commonly called is a retreat and learning center for 4-H campers. It is also the home of the 1890 Extension Conference Complex. The Natural Resources Conservation Service administers this particular project. United States Department of Agriculture Natural Resource Conservation Service provides support to this project; instead of directing the project.
**Description of the Goals/Objectives**

The overall focus of the SCSU's small farm project is to assist socially disadvantaged farmers in reversing their economic decline by providing educational and technical assistance. The specific objectives of this project include:

- improving farm incomes;
- enhancing farm management, marketing, and record keeping skills of small limited resource farmers;
- organizing cooperatives;
- educating farmers about agricultural programs, services, and resources;
- assisting farmers in expanding their farms through the participation in agricultural workshops and programs; and
- developing cooperative networks among farmers.

**Description of Targeted Area**

The targeted area for this particular project consists of 46 counties in South Carolina: Aiken, Abbeville, Allendale, Anderson, Bamberg, Barnwell, Beaufort, Berkeley, Calhoun, Charleston, Cherokee, Chester, Chesterfield, Clarendon, Colleton, Darlington, Dillon, Dorchester, Edgefield, Fairfield, Florence, Georgetown, Greenville, Greenwood, Hampton, Horry, Jasper, Kershaw, Lancaster, Laurens, Lee, Lexington, Marion, Marlboro, McCormick, Newberry, Oconee, Orangeburg, Pickens, Richland, Saluda, Spartanburg, Sumter, Union, Williamsburg, and York.
Description of Project Staff

In addition to the project director, SCSU small farm project staff consisted of an administrative specialist, marketing specialist, and eight outreach specialists.

Description of Targeted Clients

Ninety-nine percent of the farmers enrolled in this project were African Americans and the remaining 1% were White. The participating farmers were engaged in variety of innovative farming enterprises including raising feeder pigs, growing cantaloupes, and raising ratite (flightless birds such as emu, rhea, and ostrich). The biggest obstacles faced by farmers in the South Carolina area were the need to diversify their farming operations and expand into alternative enterprises.

Alcorn State University

Alcorn State University is located in Lorman, Mississippi. Alcorn State University (ASU) entered into a cooperative agreement in July of 1988 with the United States Department of Agriculture Farmers Home Administration. This agreement established a small farm project at ASU. This initial small farm project was the foundation of what would later be known as the 2501 project.
Description of the Goals/Objectives

The focus of Alcorn's small farm project is to improve the incomes of small farmers while diversifying their farming operations. According to the project description, the objectives are to:

- develop a computerized data base on all participating farm borrowers for use in completing farm financial analysis and developing farm plans;
- encourage the production of a more profitable mix of traditional and alternative enterprises;
- improve the quality of life for the citizens of Mississippi;
- conduct required in-service training for new farmers wishing to qualify for USDA programs;
- develop and enhance business management and marketing skills of selected FSA borrowers; and
- work cooperatively with FSA in implementing a pilot project, which will make inventory farmland available to socially disadvantaged individuals on a rent-free basis for three to five years.

Description of Targeted Area

The targeted area for this particular project covered 18 counties in the state of Mississippi. Several of these counties were located in the Mississippi Delta Region. The primary counties included: Panola, Quitman, Tallahchie, Washington, Holmes, Humphrey, Madison, Claiborne, Jefferson, and Amite. Additional counties were added based upon an expressed need by the farmers in those counties. The
additional counties that received services from ASU's small farm project included: Sunflower, Kemper, Winston, Sharkey, Issaquena, Hinds, Coahoma, Franklin, Copiah, Pike, Noxubee, Neshoba, and Wilkinson.

**Description of Project Staff**

The structure of ASU small farm project included a project director, assistant project director, administrative assistance, six agribusiness management specialists, marketing specialist, rural housing specialist, loan specialist, and a secretary. The project director described the staff as being “the greatest asset to the project. They are energetic and possess a sincere desire to make a difference for African American farmers”. The project director also served on the Secretary of Agriculture's Advisory Committee on Small Farms. He was the chair of that committee.

**Description of Targeted Clients**

Approximately 200 to 250 farmers were participating in ASU's small farm project. They faced a variety of traditional problems including a lack of trust and confidence in USDA, the ability to qualify for commercial loans, and lack of exposure to alternative enterprises.
Lincoln University

Unlike the other five small projects, Lincoln University (LU) is located in the Midwest. The small farm project is located away from the university in Lilbourn, Missouri.

Description of the Goals/Objectives

The goal of Lincoln’s small farm project is to provide farm management assistance to minority farmers residing in Missouri. LU’s project focuses on:

- packaging loans for farm operating, capital, and land purchases,
- providing yield calculations and farm financial analysis of past production,
- providing assistance in bringing groups together to form cooperatives,
- assisting farmers with debt restructuring, and
- helping farmers to utilize and update record keeping systems (Lincoln University Small Farm Technical Assistance and Outreach, n.d.).

Description of Targeted Area

This particular project provided services to farmers located in the Bootheel of Missouri. The majority of African American farmers in Missouri reside in the Bootheel. This area covered seven counties.

Description of Project Staff

The project staff was composed of a project director, (who was located on the campus of Lincoln University), a county supervisor, and two program assistants.
The field supervisor had been with the project for seven years. She was a former USDA employee and an expert in farm loans. One of the project assistants had been with the project since its inception. He was also a farmer and a pastor of a local church.

**Description of Targeted Clients**

In 1999, the project had approximately 133 farmers actively participating in the project. During the summer of 2001, forty-five farmers participated in Lincoln University small farm project. The farmers were initially selected from a list that was provided by USDA. These farmers lacked organized buying power and were geographically located in marginal areas.

**Summary**

Chapter IV provided a profile of the six participating small farm projects. The profiles revealed that combined, the six small farm projects were providing technical and outreach assistance in 173 counties located in five different states. There were approximately 27 specialists providing direct one-on-one assistance to over 918 farmers. These numbers should be viewed with caution and are more than likely higher given the fact that since 1995, several of the projects had to temporarily shut down. This resulted in the lost of staff members and a decline in the number of farmers participating in the 2501 Program. The numbers provided by each of the projects were reflective of the data available during the data collection period.
CHAPTER V. INTERPRETATIONS OF FINDINGS

The 2501 Program came into existence as a result of an aggressive grassroots effort to secure funding for institutions servicing minority farmers. The Minority Farmers Rights Act was the product of this effort. This Act called for "...a $10 million dollar outreach and educational program targeting FmHA Ownership and Operating loans, a registry of minority farmers, more employment and participation by people of color on USDA staff and farmer committees, reports on Civil Rights Performance, and equal access to all USDA programs" (Pennick & Gray, 1999, p. 2). In 1990, the Minority Farmers Rights Act was included in the Food and Agriculture, Conservation, and Trade Act. The 2501 Program provided five-year grants to 28 institutions from 1994-2000. Twenty-seven small farm projects were established. The 2501 Program represented the second wave of agricultural educational programs targeting minority farmers. Prior to the 2501 Program, President Ronald Regan issued Executive Order 12320 in 1983. Executive Order 12320 provided one to two million dollars annually to Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) to establish small farmers training and technical assistance projects. The 2501 Program was an extension of this original program.

This particular chapter provides a detailed description and analysis of the 2501 Program through the careful examination of the program at the project level. This chapter also presents the findings of this study while addressing the following research questions:

- What specific activities were the 2501 projects engaged in?
• To what extent was the 2501 Program implemented as planned and what factors may have impeded its successful implementation?
• What was the relationship between selected small farm projects and their major stakeholders/decision makers?
• Who benefited from the 2501 Program and in what ways?
• What was the impact of the 2501 projects?
• What does the future hold for the 2501 Program?

What Specific Activities Were the 2501 Projects Engaged In?

A review of the findings indicated that the six small farm projects were uniquely different; however, they did share one commonality. This commonality was in the provision of basic services to African American farmers. The six small farm projects were actively engaged in: (a) recruiting and retaining African American farmers, (b) providing one-on-one technical assistance, (c) disseminating information, (d) assisting farmers in completing loan applications, (e) establishing cooperatives, and (f) exposing African American farmers to alternative enterprises. This section provides a detail description and explanation of each of the above activities.

Recruiting Participants/Reaching African American farmers

The findings indicated that the six small farm projects were faced with the task of identifying and recruiting African American farmers as participants in their small farm projects. To achieve this objective, the six small farm projects
implemented a strategy that was based on the projects going directly to the farmers rather than relying on the farmers coming to them. Essentially, each of the six small farm projects had to go where the African American farmer was located. This included traveling door-to-door, visiting local churches, attending community meetings, and using other nontraditional sources as avenues for recruitment. Nontraditional sources included the local Chamber of Commerce, NAACP, and African American leaders within the communities.

The process of identifying and recruiting African American farmers revealed numerous insights regarding the farmers' participation habits and culture behavior. It was discovered that there were a large number of Black farmers who desperately needed assistance, but they were hesitant to come forward. For example, when conducting recruitment activities at local churches, the project staff found that when they made an announcement about their small farm project and the services that they offered, not one farmer would come forward or identify himself or herself as a farmer, even though there were several farmers in the congregation at those times. In most cases, a member of the congregation would identify all of the African American farmers and the ones that potentially needed assistance. This scenario was described by one of the participants:

The churches are very resourceful from the standpoint of making contact with Black Farmers. They don't always respond just because we have made an announcement. But when you start asking other folks, they will tell you that 'there is Brother Joe over there, you need to go and visit with him'. What happens is that when we are working with a client and if they are pleased with the service than they will say, 'you ought to go down and visit so and so, he needs your help. (Participant 2)
In the search for African American farmers, each of the six small farm projects discovered that there were also a large number of African American farmers who had never participated in any government program, and that there was a strong possibility that these individuals had never been counted as farmers. Alcorn State University small farm project was engaged in a process to identify African American farmers that fell into this category. Their purpose was to increase their awareness regarding government programs and to encourage their participation in these programs.

The six small farm projects also revealed that African American farmers do not trust government programs. This problem can be cited as a reason for African American farmers lack of participation in government programs. Two of the participants recounted their experiences with this very issue:

You know throughout the years, I have often thought of what my grandfather said. He refused during his years of farming to borrow money from Farmers Home Administration. He felt that it was just a way to take Black folks land, and we lost a lot of land due to the practices of county agents working in the local office. And extension was not even concerned. (Participant 14)

The reasons why the Black farmer has such indifference is because they have been victimized by the system. They have been victimized so much that they don’t trust anybody. That is the reason why it is difficult to make changes. They think that everybody that comes out there is just coming to take advantage of them. (Participant 16)

Another participant described an incident of how African American farmers' past experiences with government programs influenced their perceptions and belief. He indicated:
I remember some years ago, we (the project staff) went back to a little farm in the state to meet with some folks down there. I begin to make my presentation and when I said something to let them know that it was a government program one gentleman said. 'You know I remember when the government took my daddy’s mule.

When he raised the issue about the government taking his daddy’s mule, I said to myself, we might as well quit this conversation. This was an older gentleman who looked like he was retired from another job. If his memory was that good, he wasn’t going to buy into anything that we said that night. (Participant 2)

This information regarding African American farmers’ participation in government programs is not a new topic and the examples provided in the above paragraphs were typical of the experiences encountered by each of the six small farm projects. In an effort to gain the trust of African American farmers and to increase their participation in government programs, each of the six projects were implementing a strategy that was based upon the establishment of rapport, educating, treating the African American farmer’s information confidentially, and gaining the confidence of the African American farmer. Achieving this objective was not an overnight process, but developed out of patience and a sincere desire to make a difference. In addition, each of the six small farm projects emphasized the significance of building positive relationships and assisting the African American farmer in identifying his or her problems, and developing solutions. A participant articulated his strategy in working with African American farmers:

A lot of times, we tend to think that we know what these people need. We have to understand that we need to bring these people to the table. It is important that farm families identify those barriers that affect them. If you help them to identify those barriers, then it is their problem and not yours. If it gets to the point, where it becomes your problem, you may not have any support. You have to work
with people. We put emphasis on building relationships. (Participant 2)

Providing Technical Assistance

African American farmers are in desperate need of technical assistance in the areas of farm planning, record keeping, financial planning, and production. The provision of technical assistance in these areas was the foundation of each of the six small farm projects. Each of these projects had achieved remarkable success in the provision of these services. For example, 92% of farmers participating in the Federation of Southern Cooperatives/Land Assistance's small farm project had developed some form of record keeping system and 8% were using computers. Through the provision of technical assistance this organization had also helped save 4,054 acres of land valued at $3,356,720 through education and direct legal and technical assistance. In addition, the average farm income of participants in the Federation of Southern Cooperatives/Land Assistance Fund’s small farm project had increased from $40,665 in 1995 to $55,413 in 2000 (Federation of Southern Cooperatives/Land Assistance Fund Small Farmers Outreach Training and Technical Assistance Project Summary, n.d.).

Technical assistance was provided to the farmers primarily through one-on-one consultation with a specialist. The specialist was responsible for completing farm and home visits. Each of the six projects was actively engaged in the completion of these visits. In 1999, Fort Valley State University's small farm project completed over 500 farm and home visits (Fort Valley State University Small Farmers Outreach Training and Technical Assistance Project Summary, 1999).
Once initial contact was made with the farmer, the specialist worked directly with him or her. Depending on the farmers' need, the specialists typically visited the farmer on an average of one or two times per month. A participant described this process:

Specialists make farm visits to participants at least two times a month. Sometimes, it will be more depending on what that particular person may have going on. If that person is in the process of obtaining a loan, you may see that person four or five times in that month working with him on his application. You are making sure that all his ducks are lined up in a row and everything that you can possibly do to make that a good loan application has been done, all I's dotted and T's crossed, that may involve seeing the farmer more than just once or twice a month. (Participant 4)

When each of the six small farm projects began working with African American farmers, they discovered that almost all of the African American farmers had inadequate farm records and poor record-keeping systems. In addition, these farmers were not certifying their crops with the local Farm Service Agency. Certification required that the farmer documented what they planted, how much they planted, what their yields were and so forth. These farmers did not have a production history with the local FSA, which prevented the farmer from qualifying for various government programs.

A major task confronting each of the six small farm projects was assisting the farmers in establishing and maintaining good farm records and developing sound farm plans. A description of this process is provided below,

Basically, we try to incorporate an intensive management plan for the farmer. We try to make sure that all of our farmers have a farm plan and the farm plan maps out what their intentions are for that year. For example, how much money they are spending, how much money they
plan on making, where they are going to spend the money, and how much they expect to get in return. (Participant 4)

**Disseminating Information**

One of the primary objectives of the 2501 Program was the dissemination of information to African American farmers. According to one of the participating project directors,

Black farmers have not mastered, per se, the ability to go to the farm service agency and say, tell me what programs are coming up and how can I sign up for them. (Participant 2)

Therefore, each of the six small farm projects was engaged in an extensive process to get valuable information to African American farmers. Each of the six small farm projects interviewed employed a variety of methods to reach African American farmers. The primary goal of each of these projects was to increase the African American farmer’s awareness about USDA programs.

The methods that were being used by each of the six small farm projects were not traditional. The six small farm project staff utilized local newspapers, radio public announcements, local farmer groups, brochures, and booths at county fairs, farmer markets, farm visits, farm demonstrations, and workshops. For example in 1999, Fort Valley State University conducted 18 group meetings for more than 400 farmers. They were able to distribute more than 700 publications on subjects ranging from farm planning to alternative enterprises to their clientele (Fort Valley State University Small Farmers Outreach Training and Technical Assistance Project Summary, 1999). In their five-year summary, the Federation of Southern
Cooperatives indicated that they conducted 200 workshops/meetings and over 4,874 farmers attended those meetings.

Even though each of the six projects were actively engaged in conducting workshops, they each indicated that workshops were not necessarily the most effective method to reach or educate African American farmers. Two of the participants discussed their experiences with conducting workshops for African American farmers:

A lot of times, group meetings may not necessarily be the best way for those people to learn about a particular subject or get them involved. I think that group meetings are good when you are informing people about different programs. In terms of trying to do a group meeting and training farmers to be independent and to do it on their own, it is going to take more than a group meeting to accomplish that (Participant 4).

What we have found is that many of the clients that we provide assistance to, they don't come to workshops initially. But once they have developed the confidence in our people, then they begin to come out when we ask them to attend. (Participant 2)

In many cases, there was no distinction between the provision of technical assistance and the dissemination of information. These two areas parallel each other and were accomplished sometimes simultaneously. An example is the Alcorn State University's Small Farm Incubator. This particular project was an innovative initiative that focused on the transfer of technology and the dissemination of information to African American farmers. The small farm incubator was an outgrowth of the 2501 Program and was located in Kemper and Winston counties, Mississippi. It was a 65-acre outdoor classroom that provided small farmers with the opportunity
to receive hands-on-training in the production of commercial vegetables while exposing the farmers to the latest technology. The project director described this innovative initiative:

We assigned farmers a plot of land where they grow vegetables under our supervision. The farmers have to be responsible for getting all of the production supplies. We provide them with some equipment, a tract of land, and irrigation. They produce crops there for a period of three to five years. The goal of this center is to teach the farmer everything about growing a crop, including setting off soil, acquiring soil types, marketing, record keeping, financial management, selecting seed, and anything that is related to growing a crop. After the three to five year period, the farmer graduates and is assigned to a specialist. The specialist assists the farmer in developing a business plan to start a commercial operation. The specialist assists the farmer in completing loan packages through the Farm Service Agency and submitting the package. This routine eliminates some of the problems such as the farmers having limited farm management experience. Farmer are able to obtain this experience because they have participated in the program for three to five years.

Farmers participating in the small farm incubator achieved remarkable success. Specifically, during the fall of 1997, six farmers produced approximately 30 acres of vegetables at a value of $34,000. During the spring and summer of 1998, 13 participants produced 65 acres of vegetables at an estimated value of $75,000 (Cole-Crosby, 2000).

Assisting Farmers in Applying For and Obtaining Loans

In addition, to identifying and recruiting African American farmers, providing technical assistance, and disseminating information; the six small farm projects were also actively assisting African American farmers in applying for loans. During a
three-year period beginning in 1994 and ending in 1997, Tuskegee University small farm project assisted 284 socially disadvantaged and limited resource farmers in completing loan applications. This included assisting 106 farmers in obtaining farm operating loans totaling $1,054,000; 21 farmers in obtaining farm ownership loans that totaled $1,252,500; and 98 youth totaling $474,000 (Tuskegee University Small Farmers Outreach Training and Technical Assistance Progress Report, 1997). In 1999, Fort Valley State University small farm project assisted farmers in securing over $1.3 million in loans (Dealing with Farm Debt, 1999). In their 1999-2000-project summary, the Federation of Southern Cooperatives/Land Assistance Fund assisted farmers in receiving $13,708,070 in loans for operating, livestock, equipment, and farm ownership.

The process of assisting a farmer in applying for and receiving a loan involves many different steps. The six small farm projects were intensively engaged in each of these steps which included: (a) ensuring that the farmer meets the necessarily requirements, (b) completing the necessarily forms, (c) submitting the loan package, and (d) receiving the loan. The project staff also served as a linkage between the farmer and the local Farm Service Agency or lender and provided clarification to the farmers regarding financial standards and requirements of the lenders. One participant described the process of assisting farmers in the completion of loan applications:

We go to the farmers' home. If it is 5:00 in the evening or 7:00 in the evening, I sit there and go through the whole process. The farmer may not have everything, but once we start the application, I am with them until the end. (Participant 6)
The six small farm projects indicated that African Americans farmers participating in their projects have or have had problems in the past receiving Farm Service Agency guarantee farm ownership or operating loans. In particular, African American farmers participating in Lincoln University's small farm project had experienced difficulties in securing loans. The rural banks in their targeted area were not instrumental in assisting the African American farmer in obtaining credit. In an effort to assist African Americans farmers in their targeted area, Lincoln University sought nontraditional avenues for potential sources of funding. Lincoln University enlisted the aid of a minority owned bank, Gateway National Bank of St. Louis, Missouri. Two African American farmers were able to secure funds when traditional sources were denied and purchased land to continue their farming operations.

In addition to assisting farmers in applying for loans, the six small farm projects were engaging in a holistic approach to the loan process. The services provided by the six small farm projects were not limited to the completion of loan application but they were also providing educational training to the African American farmer. In particular, Alcorn State University's small farm project was actively engaged in providing valuable and needed educational training to African American farmers. One of their major educational activities included assisting FSA borrowers in meeting mandatory FSA requirements in order to obtain a FSA loan. The state of Mississippi required that prior to a farmer receiving a loan through FSA, the farmer must complete training in one or all of the three following areas: (a) business planning and financial management, (b) crop production, and (c) livestock production (Alcorn State University Small Farmers Outreach Training and Technical Assistance...
Project FSA Borrowers Training, n.d.). In order to achieve this objective, the farmer must select a vendor that has been approved by FSA. Alcorn State University has been designated as a FSA vendor. Project staff described their role in helping small farmers obtain this training.

Alcorn State University is certified to provide this type of training. Lending institutions are not able to provide this service, so they rely on Alcorn to provide it to their clients. It is a lot easier for us to go out and do this type of training because we are located where the farmers are. The majority of the farmers having problems are located in the Delta area. The Alcorn staff is housed in that area. We receive a list every month or every other month from FSA of the people who are getting loans through FSA. We are able to arrange a time to address those criteria, whether it is row crops, financial management, record keeping or etc. We are also requesting that people who want to get a loan go ahead and take the sessions before they apply for the loan. Their package will look stronger if they have taken the sessions.

Establishing Cooperatives

The small farm projects assisted farmers in their targeted area in the establishment of cooperatives. In particular, both the Federation of Southern Cooperatives/Land Assistance Fund and Fort Valley State University had assisted two organizations in Georgia with the establishment of the Southern Alternatives and the Coastal Georgia Small Farmers Cooperatives respectively. A description of these two cooperatives are provided below:

Southern Alternatives Cooperative

Ben and Jerry Ice Cream Company approached us about doing something for Black farmers. They indicated that they would be interested in purchasing a product from the farmers to be included in their ice cream. Ben & Jerry had what they called special project people and that person worked closely with me during the time that we
were developing this project. We were able to get loans during the first year. Ben & Jerry said that they would purchase a certain amount of pecans from our farmers. Ben & Jerry can’t put a pecan in its shell in their ice cream, the pecans have to be processed.

We ran into a lot of racism trying to find a place that would process the pecans. Every place we went to try to get the pecans processed, the folks would say, 'tell you what we will do, we will buy the pecan from the farmer, process the pecan, and then we will sell them to Ben & Jerry. This process was not different from what was already happening to them. Ben & Jerry finally had to get the major company that they were buying pecans from, to process the pecans from the Black farmers.

Throughout this whole process it occurred to me that what the farmers needed to do was to have their own processing facility. Ben & Jerry paid market price plus a premium price to the farmers. I encouraged the farmers to save half of the premium price towards building their own processing facility. And they did that and acquired their own facility in 1997. There are between 25 and 30 farmers who are a part of the cooperative. Ben & Jerry continue to buy from them for a while.

**Coastal Georgia Small Farmer's Cooperative**

Fort Valley State University small farm staff assisted 13 farmers in establishing the Coastal Georgia Small Farmer's Cooperative in East Central Georgia. This particular cooperative was actively engaged in growing string beans, cucumbers, collard greens, and squash on 250 acres of land. Since enrolling in the FVSU small farm project, the cooperative has been able to “reduce risk by purchasing additional equipment using low cost loans” (Fort Valley State University Small Farmers Outreach Training and Technical Assistance Project Summary, 1999.). The future plans of the cooperative were to acquire a bean harvesting machine and processing facility for use in grading, storing, and shipping their
vegetables (Fort Valley State University Small Farmers Outreach Training and Technical Assistance Project Summary, 1999).

**Exposure to Alternative Enterprises & Niche Markets**

The project staff for each of the six small farm projects indicated that their targeted clients were heavily engaged in the production of traditional crops such as cotton and soybeans. Each of the six small farm projects revealed that they were actively engaged in introducing their clients to alternative enterprises as a means of increasing their incomes and ensuring their long-term sustainability. In fact, in 2000, 87% of the farmers participating in the Federation of Southern Cooperatives/Land Assistance grew alternative crops compared to 54% in 1995 (Federation of Southern Cooperatives/Land Assistance Fund Small Farmers Outreach Training and Technical Assistance Project Summary, n.d.). Two of the project directors described their experiences in introducing alternative enterprises in their targeted area.

A lot of the farmers in our area want to continue to grow traditional crops like cotton and soybeans. The prices are not as good as they were in the past and they are still trying to stick with those traditional crops and losing money. We are trying to introduce them to nontraditional crops or alternative crops such as sweet potatoes, greens, purple hull peas, or okras. We are trying to get them to start with one or two acres for one year and assist them in marketing and selling those particular crops. Then they can see how easy it is compared to some of the traditional crops and the amount of money that they can make off of those two acres compared to an acre of cotton or soybeans. (Participate 17)

The small farmer and the socially disadvantaged farmer have unique problems. They do not as a general rule have the resources to operate like large farms. Therefore, they end up on a small scale and tend not to be economical. For that reason, many of the small
farmers are getting out of farming or looking for alternative enterprises that do not require large capital outlay in the front end and large acreage. We have tried to encourage farmers to produce fruits and vegetables. Both of these crops can be grown several times a year on the same plot of land. That makes it more economical for the farmer. (Participant 2)

South Carolina State University's small farm project encouraged their farmers to experiment with alternative enterprises. One of their farmers was growing ratite. Ratite are flightless birds such as emu, rhea, and ostrich. According to a publication released by the project,

...the initial investment in ratite farming, in most cases, is less than traditional farm enterprises such as cattle and broilers. Prices on these birds vary from producer to producer. The rhea is the least expensive, the emu is the next and the ostrich is the most expensive. Rhea eggs are sold from $250 and up; chicks on week and older start at $400 and up; grey yearling $1950 per pair; white yearlings $9000 per pair; and white breeders $7500 per pair. (South Carolina State University 1890 Research and Extension, n.d.)

To What Extent Was the 2501 Program Implemented as Planned & What Factors May Have Impeded Its Successful Implementation?

A review of the findings indicated that there were several factors that severely restricted the successful implementation of the 2501 Program. The main factor identified was the provision of guaranteed and timely funding to the 27 projects working at the grassroots level. Funding at the national level was sporadic and uncertain which affected the ability of the small farm projects to successfully implement the 2501 Program. This particular section outlines the sequence of
events that occurred with the 2501 Program from 1993-2001 (see Table 7). The findings for this study characterized a program with a five-year funding cycle that has been irregular. The uncertainty of this funding cycle resulted in the loss of staff, projects temporarily shutting down, and the ability of the small farm projects to provide needed technical and outreach assistance to African American farmers.

**Description of the Five-Year Funding Cycle**

In 1993, Secretary of Agriculture Mike Espy awarded 21 organizations, $1 million to develop comprehensive plans for implementing the 2501 Program. The 2501 Program had previously been included in the Food and Agriculture, Conservation, and Trade Act of 1990. In 1994, 27 projects were established and began providing services directly to minority farmers. The source of the funding in 1994 was unclear. According to a publication released by the National Office of Outreach, $2.995 million was appropriated to the 2501 Program in 1994; however, the individual projects did not receive those funds until 1995. In 1995, $5.995 million was awarded to the 27 institutions. This figure included $2.995 for 1994 and $3 million dollars for 1995. The amount awarded to each project ranged from $500,00 to $49,806 (National Office of Outreach, personal communication, 2001). The money awarded was desperately needed to implement the small farm projects. The
Table 7. 2501 Process Flow Diagram

<table>
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<tr>
<th>(Program Activities)</th>
<th>(Project Activities)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The 2501 Program was incorporated into the 1990 Farm Bill.</td>
<td>21 organizations submitted proposals &amp; receives planning grants.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In 1993, Secretary of Agriculture awards $1 million in planning grants to 21 organizations.</td>
<td>During the FY 1994, $2.995 and $3 million were appropriated respectively under section 2501. The appropriation for FY 1994 was combined and awarded in FY 1995.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>During the FY 1994, $2.995 and $3 million were appropriated respectively under section 2501. The appropriation for FY 1994 was combined and awarded in FY 1995.</td>
<td>27 small farm projects were established &amp; receive 5 year grants to implement 2501 projects.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In FY 1996, only $1 million authorized. Money was awarded on to the projects on an as needed basis to accommodate the projects.</td>
<td>Grant recipients set up projects &amp; began servicing minority farmers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2501 Program was not a line item in the USDA budget. USDA had to find alternative means to fund the projects. In 1997, $1 million were appropriated from USDA and $4.5 million from the Fund for Rural America. Each of the projects received funding until June 1997.</td>
<td>Projects were in a holding pattern. Funding started to run out. Struggled to find funds. Project personnel had to be creative in seeking funds from outside sources.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Projects continued to provide services to their targeted clientele. Projects also began to lose staff. Funding was not stable.</td>
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Table 7. Continue

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<th>(Program Activities)</th>
<th>(Project Activities)</th>
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<tr>
<td>In FY 1998, $3 million appropriated. The amount provided funds until February 1998. Funds were provided by other agencies.</td>
<td>Projects continue to provide services, but operating with an uncertain future. Funding was sporadic. Some projects shut down.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>In FY 1999, 2.9 million appropriated.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>In FY 2000, 3.0 million appropriated from USDA. An additional $5.2 million from the Fund for Rural America were appropriated.</td>
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<td>The 5-year funding cycle ended September 30, 2000.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>In December of 2000, National Office of Outreach announced at the Annual Professional Agricultural Workers Conference that the RFP was not available. No specific time frame was given.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>On April 30, 2001, RFP was released. It was 7 months late. The structure of the 2501 program changed. The program was no longer on a five year funding cycle, but required that proposals are submitted annually.</td>
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implementation process for each of the six small farm projects included hiring staff, promoting the project, recruiting participants, and conducting one-on-one technical assistance.

Even though the Food and Agriculture, Conservation, and Trade Act of 1990 had authorized $10 million per year to the 2501 Program, only $5.995 million was awarded during the fiscal years 1994 and 1995. The question that remained unanswered was, why were only $5.995 million awarded for those two years instead of $10 million per year? The answer to this particular question could be linked directly to the political process and having a clear and concise understanding of how USDA’s funding process works. In order for a USDA program to be guaranteed funding, the program had to be designated as a line item in the USDA budget. If the program was included as a line item, then funding for that program was guaranteed. If the program was not a line item in the budget, then funding was not secure or guaranteed. Section 2501 was not a line item in the USDA budget; therefore, funding of the project was at the discretion of the Secretary of Agriculture and whatever money he or she was able to locate. According to a participant:

The bill should have been written in such a manner that it authorized money and appropriated the money. The 2501 Program should have been authorized as a line item in the USDA budget... the money has come from a discretionary fund from the secretary. That is not guaranteed money; that is why we have problems. (Participant 11)

Another participant indicated

The 2501 Program should have been a line item in USDA budget, so that we would not have to go there every year. This is like insurance. It is there and it comes out every year. The money
needs to be there every year so that we can have a project. So that we can have personnel to stay with us. So that we can have rapport with the farmers. The farmers know that this person is going to come by, that this is a person that I can trust and so on. We need that. No annual budgets. We can write up things that we need annually, but we have to know that the funding is there. (Participant 10)

Because the 2501 Program was not a line item in the USDA's budget, the process of obtaining funding for the program on a yearly basis was uncertain. There were 27 projects up and running at this time; however, funding was not guaranteed for the entire five-year period. Initially, the funding cycle was extended over a 18-month period. Upon completion of that 18-month period, funding for the projects was very sporadic. During the fiscal year 1996, only “...$1 million was authorized for the 2501 Program against a appropriation of $3 million. As a result of the appropriation for fiscal year 1996, the money was [distributed] to the projects on an as needed basis to accommodate the projects” (Tuskegee University, personal communication, June 2001). The following year, in 1997, the 2501 Program was appropriated $1 million dollars; however, USDA was able to obtain an additional $4.5 million dollars funds from the Fund for Rural America. With these additional funds, the small farm projects were guaranteed funds until June 1997 (Tuskegee University, personal communication, June 2001). The additional funds were able to keep the projects running for a short period of time.

At the start of the fiscal year 1998 (October 1, 1998), the projects were not current. During the fiscal year 1998, the 2501 Program was appropriated $3 million
dollars. This $3 million dollars provided funds to the projects until February 1998. “Additional funds provided by other agencies within USDA allowed USDA to fund the projects until September 30, 1998” (Tuskegee University, personal communication, June 2001).

The 2501 Program received $2.9 million and $3.0 million in 1999 and 2000 respectively. According to the National Office of Outreach, an additional $5.2 million was appropriated to the 2501 Program in 2000. This additional money was from the Fund for Rural America (United States Department of Agriculture National Office of Outreach, personal communication, 2001). Data on the date or time frame of the distribution of these funds to the individual small farm projects were not available. However, it was clear that the small farm projects were experiencing problems during this period. Despite these problems, the six small farm projects interviewed for this study were in operation at some level.

The five-year funding cycle ended on September 30, 2000. The 2501 Program was scheduled to continue, even though the Request for Proposals (RFP) was not available. This RFP would allow the projects to apply for grants for the next funding cycle. The six small farm projects were able to continue to provide services to their targeted clientele. Five of the six small farm projects interviewed were located within their university’s extension program. The university’s extension program was able to pick up the 2501 Program when the funds were depleted. One of the participants described this transitional period:

After the 2501 dollars were exhausted, we transferred some of our folks to vacant positions until we could get some additional dollars. These were positions that we had in other projects. (Participant 16)
Another participant indicated

We got some state help last year. This carried us over when the 2501 Program was having problems. The state had our people doing stuff that they were not going to do because it meant going out in the field. We were still getting money from the federal government. The state money just helped carry us over.

(Participant 10)

In December 2000, representatives from the National Office of Outreach announced at the annual Professional Agricultural Workers Conference at Tuskegee University that the RFP was not available. According to representatives from the National Office of Outreach, the RFP would be available soon. The RFP was released on April 30, 2001. It was seven months late. During this period the six small farm projects interviewed for this study were still providing services to African American farmers. Each of the participants was asked to described the impact that the late RFP had on their projects. According to one of the directors:

We have tried to hold our personnel together, and it has been very difficult. For the last proposal, they had been telling us that it was going to come out in the fall, then the winter, and then the spring, and then the late spring. Of course, Washington is going to say, you don’t understand what we have to go through, which I am sure is true. But we are just trying to do a good job and keep things going. Farmers need help. They can’t worry about what is happening in Washington. They need money to buy seed, to buy fertilizer, to buy the equipment to break the ground. (Participant 11)

Impact of Unstable Funding

The unstable funding cycle of the 2501 Program had a significant impact on the six small farm projects. The findings indicated that each of the six small farm projects had experienced one or all of the following problems as a result of the
unstable funding: (a) inability to maintain staff, (b) temporarily had to shut the project down, (c) had to release employees, (d) lost their office, (f) unable to provide services to targeted clients, and (6) relationships with community, farmers, and other USDA agencies were negatively affected. A participant provided a vivid description of the impact of the erratic funding process on their small farm project:

The project was cut back. At one point, we had a project director, an associate director, four specialists, a secretary, an office, and some individual office space. We even had toll free lines. We were really servicing our clients. We had a home base where we could provide meetings. Our whole method of servicing clients changed after the funding was cut. We went through a process of just saving what we could and servicing whom we could. We lost our office. We lost the secretary. The specialists left, the associate director left. We were down at one point to two people. We were down to 75% pay. It got really bad as far as trying to service our clients. We didn't have mileage and the resources to do that. Our clients really fell through the cracks during those years. The funding and the erratic pulling of funds have made it so that we could not keep committed staff. I am committed. I am going to ride this dead horse out and beat it until it comes back alive. I love this project so much that I would do that. (Participant 19)

The other five small farm projects expressed similar frustrations with the inability of the 2501 Program to provide secure funding in order that they could continue to provide services to African American farmers. The participants in this study provided detailed accounts of how the 2501 Program had been ineffective from the standpoint of allowing the projects to achieve their objective. They expressed concerns with losing valuable staff and the inability to replace those that were lost. Several of their responses addressing this issue are listed below:

How can you hire somebody if you can't promise him or her a salary beyond not even a year? This program has proven itself over and over again and why they keep messing with it, I don't know. We are trying to keep people on and we can't give them a full year contract.
can you expect someone to stay? We have had to send letters that your contract ends at this date and we cannot promise anything else. We have been able to come up with a few dollars and then we had to change the date. These folks have been very committed and they have stayed with us amazingly. I know some projects that have lost their staff. We have been very frank with our staff. If you find that there is another opportunity that you consider to be more stable, and you want to go for it, please do. You won't hurt our feelings. We will feel bad but not at you. We will feel bad at the circumstances that put us in this position. (Participant 10)

If you are uncertain about the next year, then to bring someone into that type of situation, and have them employed for a year or six months, then next year, you don't know what your funding is going to be. Every program went through a shortfall. I do know that these programs didn't get the full level of funding that they expected. As a result, they had to release some of their people. (Participant 4)

What Was the Relationship Between the Small Farm Projects & Their Major Stakeholders?

I think that there needs to be better communication between USDA and us, to the point that we are on the same team. I don't think that we have the perfect marriage. (Participant 4)

The quote presented above was made by one of the participants of this study. He described his concerns regarding the relationship between the small farm projects and USDA. The findings revealed a turbulent relationship between USDA and the small farm projects. This relationship was based on an accumulation of historical events and experiences that occurred at the national, state, and local levels. This particular section addresses some of the key issues and concerns of the six participating small farm projects at the national, state, and local levels.
National Level

In 1997, USDA created the National Office of Outreach. This office had the primary responsibility of administering the 2501 Program. The National Office of Outreach was tasked to work directly with the 27 small farm projects. The six small farm projects cited three major areas of concerns: (a) inability of the National Office to clearly articulate the needs of the program and minority farmers, (b) lack of consistent leadership at the national level, and (c) poor mechanisms of reporting at the national level.

The political process heavily influenced the leadership of the 2501 Program. The political agenda of the individual in charge also played a significant role in the implementation of the 2501 Program and whether or not they had a vested interest in ensuring its survival. According to one of the participants, the 2501 Program was initially implemented under a strong leadership regimen. Since that time, the National Office of Outreach experienced a high turnover rate among the directors/administrators. Listed below are the responses of three of the participants. They voiced their frustrations at the lack of consistent leadership within the program and the need for leadership that would set the pace and offer some form of guidance.

I think that it just goes down to the point that there is no one there that has a vested interest in supporting the project. It is sort of like a rotating directorship. I don't think that it means as much to the national office as opposed to the people who are at the ground level trying to make this thing work. (Participant 10)

You never know whom you are really working with. Today, I can call the national office and ask to speak with the associate director or director and it is not the same person that I talked with 3 days
ago. It is somebody new. There is a constant turnover. You don't know where you really stand. (Participant 20)

Since the inception of the 2501 Program, the program has not had anybody in charge of outreach who knows what this project is really about. It seems as if the national office keep asking for the same thing and we keep supplying the same thing. We really don't get any support from Washington, DC (office of outreach). We have tried to have meetings. They have pledged support. We don't get any support. They say that they cannot lobby Congress. They don't have to lobby Congress. They could at least provide information. They don't seem able to do that. (Participant 10)

In describing their experiences with the National Office of Outreach, the staff of the six participating projects were asked to identify weaknesses at this level. In addition to funding and lack of leadership, they indicated that there is a tremendous need to improve the reporting process for the 2501 Program. The following comments summarized the frustrations expressed by several of the participants:

Another weakness of the national office is that they need to do an annual accomplishment report that summarizes everything that is accomplished over the years. You should be able to get a copy. At the national office, they don't have a database system in place. They need to have the quarterly report that we submit designed so that all this stuff can be easily fed into a database and printed back out as one report. (Participant 4)

No one knows what the actual impact of the 2501 program has been from 1994-2001 at the national level. Each state publishes some reports, but not one big report (Participant 16)

There were several explanations provided regarding the current state of the National Office of Outreach. According to one director, the National Office of
Outreach is administered from the same pool of money that has been designated for the small farm projects. This director indicated:

The National Office of Outreach administers the program, and they just don’t have any money to employ a staff to monitor all of the projects....See what happens is that the National Office of Outreach has not been funded to be able to appropriately administered the program. If you utilize all the dollars to operate the National Office of Outreach, then you won’t have any money to operate the program at the universities. So what they have to do then is basically implement the program with a token staff at the national level and share whatever few dollars that they have with the local level and that is not a whole lot. (Participant 16)

State/Local Levels

The six small farm projects had a very unique relationship with USDA at the state and local levels. This relationship could be characterized as a work in progress. It was a relationship that was highly influenced by historical events, the culture of the community, and the political arena. Each of the participating parties were somewhat dependent on the other in order to successfully administer their programs or projects. At the local level, USDA agencies relied heavily on the small farm projects to describe and explain their programs to minority farmers. They also depended upon the small farm projects to provide assistance to minority farmers in completing loan applications and ensuring that the farmers met the necessarily requirements. This arrangement was beneficial for the local USDA agency because it freed up valuable man-hours that they would spend working on an application.

The participants were asked to describe their relationship with local and state USDA officials. Their responses characterized a relationship that was heavily
influenced by the culture of the community, the political environment, and past historical events. This relationship was initially unstable; however; as time progressed, it became somewhat more solid. Several of the participants recounted their experiences with USDA agencies during the initial setup of the 2501 Program:

We didn’t trust the local FSA and they didn’t trust us. We have been able to get over those hurdles by sitting down, meeting with them, talking with them, working together. It was a long process. They had to gain our confidence and we had to gain theirs. Not every county is the same. Some counties are better than others because some counties are willing to work with us and we work together. (Participant 14)

Initially, the attitude of USDA wasn’t as encouraging. We gathered from our experience that they felt the specialists would cause additional problems for them in some areas. The objective of the specialist is to raise the awareness level of the social disadvantaged farmers. When you do that people begin to raise questions that they have never asked before. So we think that may have affected the relationship earlier on. I think that as time past, the agents or USDA staff came to realize that there is no threat from the specialists and the attitudes in many offices seem to have improved over time. (Participant 2)

With the reorganization of Farm Service Agency, Rural Development, they have been very supportive. In fact with the last proposal, they sent letters of support and I think that if we do a good job, it helps their job. I think that they realized that and we also realized it. We like having a positive working relationship. (Participant 11)

After the change of administration from the first Bush to the Clinton administration, the state office has been very supportive. We have not always agreed, but we have always worked well together, well, most of the time, before that we could not work with the state office. They were not interested in the project. (Participant 10)

The descriptions given above by the participants characterized a relationship that progressed over time. The small farm projects were able to find a common
ground with the local USDA agencies and establish working relationships. In other
cases, the relationship was as turbulent as it had been in the past. A participant
described this negative relationship and its impact on the ability of the small farm
projects to successfully service their clients:

> We have to really go in and fight them, just like we did before 2501. The agency may not help the farmer with his or her loan package. They may not give him or her an application. They may give him or her erroneous information. When you are in a situation like that, you can make it work if you try, even if a farmer has done something wrong in his application or doesn’t have certain information. If you really want to help him, you can make it work, but you can also not make it work and be within the law. So you’ve got to have the desire to make it work to keep the farmer in business. (Participant 14)

One of the participants provided a vivid account of an incident that occurred with the local USDA agency.

At the end of 1997, our specialist assisted a farmer in the preparation of a loan application. It was the farmer’s first time in trying to get a loan. The farmer was from a county that had a history of racist behavior. I told the specialist who prepared the loan application that when the denial letter came to let me know. I wanted to attend the hearing. Sure enough the letter came. The farmer requested the hearing, this is the first step in the appeals process. And we waited for a date.

I received a call one day around 7:30 in the morning from a cousin of the farmer. He indicated that the farmer had called him and said that the hearing had been set for 9:30 that morning. I believed that it was designed this way to prevent us from attending the hearing. I told the cousin that I would be there. We hadn’t even worked on the loan application. We were assuming that we would be notified in advance of when the hearing would be held and we would have time to prepare. But here it was and we were in a rush. During the drive to the hearing, we reviewed his application. I realized why he had been denied and the agency cited his managerial ability and the peanut years. I looked at the application for that year. The specialist didn’t substitute the
county averages for the two years of declared disasters. As we drove to the meeting, we substituted the county averages for those years.

When we got to the meeting, I indicated to the committee what was wrong with the application. The application was incorrect because we didn’t substitute the county averages. Substituting those two years would have made the farmer have a good year. One of the county committee members asked me if I was using someone else’s work? And I told him that according to the regulation the farmer could do that. We got into a heated discussion. The credit person from the local office was sitting at the head of the table and he was constantly whispering with the other members.

I knew that the county committee would uphold their decision. I called the state office and I said that ‘you know, I am concerned about these people and they are not going to do anything’. I was threatening and I said if you want a fight you have got one. So that day a letter was hand delivered to the Secretary of Agriculture indicating that this particular case was a classical example of how Black farmers are discriminated against. That whole process was just to get him determined eligible. Eligible to receive a loan, not to determine the feasibility of the loan. We asked for an investigation of that office in our letter. This is an example of how Black farmers are kept out. They can’t even get in the door. (Participant 14)

The incident described in the above paragraphs characterized a hostile environment and working relationship between this particular staff member and one local USDA agency. This story did not end at that particular point. The farmer in question was determined eligible to receive a loan and he did receive the loan; however, it was not an easy or problem-free process. Participant 14 recounted the sequence of events that led up to the farmer receiving the loan.

I think that the county committee was starting to get afraid. They were meeting somewhere and wanted to talk to me. I refused to talk to them and I refused to talk to them the next day too. They called the farmer and told him that if he would come back to another meeting, they
would give him the money, which was not totally the truth, but it made him want to go back to the meeting.

This time they didn’t let the credit person come to the meeting. They told me that he was on some type of medication for his nerves and they couldn’t trust what he would say or do. When we went back, everything was so lighthearted. You just knew that they were going to determine him eligible and move it to the feasibility stage. Sure enough before the end of the day, they had called to tell him that was determined eligible. And he moved on to the feasibility stage. This is the stage where the same guy, who was at the first meeting, but didn’t get to come back, is now the person who is working on the application. They called us one day and said that the farmer had a debt of $20,000 that we didn’t include in the application. We knew that couldn’t be true. It turns out when we kept investigating, we found out what happened. Someone had added a small zero, it wasn’t even the size of the others to make a $2,000 loan look like $20,000. We did the verification of debt from his creditors. A bank sent a verification of a loan that the farmer had. The loan was $2,018, but someone had added another zero to make the loan look like $20,018. That application process started in November and the farmer didn’t get his money until August of the next year. You run into that kind of thing often. It has gotten to the point, that we don’t have many farmers who get their money from the agencies. A lot of farmers go to suppliers to get their fertilizers, seeds, and chemicals and then the farmer have to take the crop back or the farmer will sell the crop to the supplier. (Participant 14)

Despite the frequent occurrence of incidents of this nature, the participating six small farm projects were able to continue to assist African Americans in applying for and receiving loans. They relied heavily on utilizing nontraditional sources when other avenues of funding had closed. Lincoln University in particular enlisted the aid of a minority owned bank, Gateway National Bank of St. Louis, Missouri. Two African American farmers were able to secure funds when traditional sources were denied.

The findings of this study also revealed that the small farm project staff perceived a lack of knowledge and understanding among USDA agencies at the
local and state levels in addressing the needs and issues facing minority farmers.

For example, one of the participants recalled a conversation with a local Farm Service Agency director:

I remember talking with a FSA director and he was saying that they wanted to have more Black farmers voting on the county committees. I asked him, How did the farmers get the ballots to vote? He indicated that they mailed the ballots to the farmers. I then asked him, if he received the mailing list from the people who participated in their programs and he said yes. The majority of African American farmers don't participate in these programs. African American farmers are not going to be on the list, so the FSA director is not mailing to them. The FSA director indicated that he didn't know that. Obviously, he didn't know it. That is basically the effect. You are not mailing to them. So then our small farm project started doing publicity on it. We would tell the farmers to go to the local offices and register to vote. We started having farmers to do that. As soon as we started doing that, then the question was, are they really farmers? What's a farmer? Do they have $1,000 in sales? Do they have enough land? Of course, that is discouraging because this had never been called into question before. One of our farmers was put on a committee as a non-voting observer. What does that mean? He can raise his hand if he sees something going wrong, but that doesn't mean that anything is going to happened. (Participant 10)

The meaning behind this experience is that this particular local FSA director was not knowledgeable of his targeted clientele. He was not consciously aware of who participated in the programs that he was administering. Another participant offered an explanation of why local USDA officials are unaware and fail to understand the issues facing minority farmers. He indicated,

A part of it goes back to the fact that a lot of USDA representatives don't leave the office. They expect farmers to come to them. Well, if you have a history of not receiving good treatment when you go into an office for a loan then you are not going to go again. (Participant 10)
Each of the six participating projects expressed a desire to maintain a solid, working relationship with USDA at the state and local levels. As one participant described the situation:

We have setup a monthly meeting with each of the federal agencies to meet and discuss our relationship as well as the things that we can do to work together based on some common goals that we both have. We meet monthly. At that time they provide us with new information or technology that comes from Washington. Staff members in the field are required to attend those meetings also. (Participant 17)

Who Benefits from the 2501 Program & In What Ways?

The 2501 Program was implemented as a nontraditional agricultural educational program designed to provide technical and outreach assistance to socially, disadvantaged minority farmers. This was the official goal; however, it was also envisioned that the 2501 Program would bridge the gap between USDA and minority farmers, in particular African American farmers. Based upon the direct and indirect goals of this 2501 Program, it was concluded that there were two primary beneficiaries of this program: USDA and socially, disadvantaged farmers.

According to the participants of this study USDA benefited from the 2501 Program because USDA had someone or an organization who was able to thoroughly explain their programs and to do the groundwork. The 2501 small farm projects were willing and able to provide one-on-one technical and outreach assistance at the grassroots level to African American farmers. African American farmers benefited because they had an organization from within their community that was dedicated and committed to the advancement of African American farmers as
well as who had experience and expert knowledge of USDA rules and regulations. This organization assisted them in receiving fair and equal treatment as well as increase their awareness and knowledge level. With the assistance of the 2501 projects, African American farmers could overcome many of the obstacles that were placed in their path. These obstacles were one of the primary reasons for the incorporation of the 2501 Program into the Food and Conservation Trade Act of 1990. The 2501 Program offered a win-win situation for all parties involved. One of the participants characterized this mutual beneficial relationship:

There is bad blood between African American farmers and USDA. With that bad blood there is distrust among African American farmers and there is an unwillingness to work together. This program helps to bridge the gap, to bring the two back together. USDA has someone to thoroughly explain their programs to the farmers to the point where the farmer may feel like, 'hey, I am not being discriminated against. Maybe I just didn't qualify for the program. Not everything is going to be from a racist or discriminatory standpoint. Some of it is a lack of understanding on both parts. Farmers sometimes fail to understand what is involved in policy and regulations, or who gets what in a program. Sometimes USDA may not fully understand the goals and objectives of the farmer or what the farmer is trying to present to them. The 2501 Program helps to create a better understanding of what each individual is doing and ensures that there is fair play for everybody. (Participant 4)

Another participant commented on the role of the 2501 projects. He viewed this role as that of a mediator.

We are kind of like a mediator between the farmer and USDA. This program allows us to be out there and try to identify problems and develop solutions before they become unsolvable. We try to deal with discrimination and point it out there. We go with the farmer to these agencies and let the agencies know that there is somebody who is there supporting the farmer and who knows the rules and regulations. (Participant 13)
Each of the participating six small farm projects agreed that the 2501 Program was beneficial for both African American farmers and for USDA.

What Was the Impact of the 2501 Projects During the Time Period of 1994-2001?

The findings of this study revealed that the six participating small farm (2501) projects had a significant impact on African American farmers in their targeted area. The 2501 projects had the following impacts:

- Increased the awareness of Black farmers regarding government programs.
- Improved the managerial skills of Black farmers in their targeted area.
- Increased the number of Black farmers applying for and receiving loans.
- Achieved success in improving the attitudes and perceptions of Black farmers in their targeted area regarding government programs.
- Increased the number of Black farmers participating in agricultural programs.

Examples of African American farmers who achieved remarkable success as a result of participating in the six small farm projects are presented below.

Farmer A

Farmer A was a female farmer who owed a successful poultry operation. She began farming in 1991 when she obtained a $400,000 loan from a local bank. Her success was attributed to her business skills, life experiences, and the assistance provided by the Tuskegee University Small Farmer Outreach Training and Technical

When I heard about poultry houses, I thought I could do it. At first I thought I might not be able to get a loan because I was Black. I had always heard about that. The single cost of a single poultry house was $100,000. Then I talked to a man from [X Poultry]. I told [X Poultry] I thought I would like just two houses, but he told me if I was going to have two, I might as well have four. I decided to go with four houses...I have been showing a profit every year.... In fact, things look a little better each year. The loan will be paid off in another four years.

(Farmer A)

Farmer B

Farmer B was a retired teacher and a female farmer. She was also the part owner of 490 acres of land that has been in her family for over 50 years. The 2501 Program was instrumental in helping Farmer B to establish a recording keeping system. She indicated that prior to enrolling in the 2501 Program, her records were maintained on regular paper. The 2501 Program assisted Farmer B in staying abreast of programs and knowing when to sign up for the programs. As a result of the Fort Valley State University small farm project, she established permanent grazing on the farm for cattle operation, built fences, tested her soil, and started a catfish operation. In 2000, Farmer B was awarded the Small Farm Family Award for her accomplishments.
Farmer C

Farmer C was a small tobacco and swine farmer participating in Fort Valley State University small farm project. He inherited the operation from his father. Farmer C also shared this operation with his brother. They began farming in 1981. Farmer C needed assistance in reducing his debt load and obtaining an operating loan for his farming operation. The 2501 Program was able to assist Farmer C in reducing his debt loan and developing a farm plan with a positive cash flow. As a result of his participation in the Fort Valley State University small farm project, Farm C has been able to computerize his farming operation, improved his record-keeping system, and became knowledgeable of his total earnings and expenses (Fort Valley State University Small Farmers Outreach Training and Technical Assistance Project Summary, 1999). Farmer C provided a vivid description of his experiences.

My grandfather was a sharecropper and it just past on down through generations. My dad, he took it over. When I finished high school my father asked us, Do you want to go to college or farm? It was 11 of us. My first year in farming was in 1981. I was working with USDA before I start working with Fort Valley. I had a lot of problems with USDA. We had to fill out the application package ourselves. I applied for a loan in December of 1980 and I didn’t get the loan until July of 1981. USDA kept giving me the run around. From that day on, I had problems. I had problems with supervised loans. You are not supposed to have a supervised loan but for one year, I had six or seven. FVSU has been a big help in filling out applications for USDA. They have helped me budget my loans, helped me get disaster payments. I never got disaster payments before working with FVSU. It has been very different since working with FVSU. The loans have taken as long. I get them on time. When I called the county agent, he is right here to help me to do whatever needs to be done. (Farmer C)
**Farmer D**

Farmer D was the sole-operator and owner of a successful feeder-pig operation in South Carolina. Farmer D indicated that prior to participating in the 2501 Program, he had no idea who to go to for assistance with his farming operation. He stated that he was struggling and that he was trying to accomplish for years what he has accomplished by participating in South Carolina State project. He indicated that in the past, USDA agencies would not assist him, and he was frequently given the run around. He cited a lack of knowledge among the Black farmer as their greatest weakness. Farmer D’s operation consisted of three bay areas that housed several thousands feeder pigs. Farmer D contracts with one of the regional feed mills. The regional feed mill provides Farmer D with the pigs. He is responsibility for raising the pigs from three weeks to nine weeks of age. Farmer D has a well-organized system in place. He maintains detailed records and knows how many hogs he has at any given time and how many he has lost. This operation was worth about $600,000.

In addition to the success stories described above, the numbers reported by the six participating schools also served as evidence to show the impact that the 2501 Program had on their targeted area. In particular Tuskegee University indicated that 72% of their participating farmers had established farm business records and analysis, 76% had developed or improved their farming practices and technique since enrolling in their project (Tuskegee University Small Farmers Outreach Training and Technical Assistance Project Progress Report, 1997). Ninety-two percent of the farmers participating in the Federation of Southern Cooperatives/Land Assistance Fund small farm project had developed some form of
In evaluating the numbers from a larger perspective, the 1997 Census of Agriculture indicated that despite the decline in the number of African American farmers, progress was being made. From 1992 to 1997, the number of Blacks participating in farming had decreased from 18,816 in 1992 to 18,451 in 1997. This represented a -1.9% rate of decline which was the lowest in 15 years. Between 1987 and 1992, the rate of decline was -18%. From 1982 to 1987, the rate of decline was -31%. Increases in the number of African American farmers were also reported in 1997 for four states: Alabama, Arkansas, Georgia, and Florida. Three of the six participating small farm projects were located in the states that showed an increase in the number of African American farmers. One of the participants made the following comments regarding the 1997 Census of Agriculture data:

You have seen that the number of Black farmers has increased.
You have found that the number of land owned by Black farmers has increased and than there are some cases where it hasn't
increased. The rate of declined has slowed down. These are all positive signs and I would say that it is no coincidence that this has occurred during the life of the 2501 Program. Some folks would say that this has something to do with the fact that the Census Bureau doesn't do the Census of Agriculture anymore. USDA does the Census of Agriculture. They would also say that USDA has a vested interest in showing improvement as opposed to showing discrimination. There may be a little bit of that in there, but at the same time, the Department of Commerce who used to do it had no interest in showing a bad picture. They were not a part of racist USDA. So I think that it kind of wash either way. I think the program has helped farmers hold on. I think that there is a lot more to do. I don't think it is enough to say that you have added a few more people, a few more acres here, but we have slowed things down a little. I think that is the benefit of the project. (Participant 10)

The success of the 2501 Program can be directly attributed to the work that is being accomplished at the project level. The six participating small farm projects were instrumental in ensuring the long-term sustainability of African American farmers. Despite the accomplishments made at the project level, the findings reveal that the implementation process of the 2501 Program was severely flawed and needed to undergone tremendous changes.

What Does the Future Hold For the 2501 Program?

On April 30, 2001, the United States Department of Agriculture released the Request for Proposals for the Outreach and Assistance for Socially Disadvantaged Farmers and Ranchers Program (7 CFR Part 26). This document outlined the new rules and regulations governing the 2501 Program. The Outreach and Assistance for Socially Disadvantaged Farmers and Ranchers Program, previously known as the Small Farmers Outreach Training and Technical Assistance Program had
undergone significant changes in its structure and eligibility requirements.

According to the Federal Register (2001):

...when funds are available, the USDA Office of Outreach will publish a request for proposals for the Outreach and Assistance for Socially Disadvantaged Farmers and Ranchers Program. The USDA Office of Outreach will make competitive awards to eligible organizations and institutions to implement a one-year plan for outreach and technical assistance to encourage and assist socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers to own and operate farms and ranches and to participate in agricultural programs. (p. 21609)

The above statement implied that there was uncertainty in whether or not funds would be available for this program. If funds were available then a request for proposals would be released and awards would be made on an annual basis. Previously, the small farm projects were on a five-year plan. One of the participants in this study expressed his feeling regarding the change from a five-year plan to an annual plan. He indicated

What can you do in one year? It takes at least five years to make a difference. In the first year, you are really getting to know the person. You are analyzing his or her situation. So you really don’t have an impact for at least three or five years. Sometimes, it will take the farmer 20 or 30 years to get in the situation that he or she is in, so you can’t spring them out in one year. (Participant 13)

There is a great deal of truth in this statement. When working with African American farmers a large of amount of time was devoted to establishing trust and building rapport. African American farmers have been victimized by the system and they are hesitant to trust government programs. The six participating small farm projects gained the trust and had a respectable reputation with their targeted clientele. This process did not occur over night, it was an on-going process. It took
each of the projects years to get to the point where they were at the time of this study.

Other changes in the 2501 Program could be observed in its eligibility requirements. Organizations falling into the following categories were now eligible to apply for grants under this program: 1890 Land grant Colleges, including Tuskegee University, Indian tribal community colleges and Alaska native cooperative colleges, Hispanic serving post-secondary educational institutions and or other qualifying educational institutions and community-based organizations. The difference between the previous version of the 2501 Program and this newer version was that any qualifying educational institution was now eligible to apply for a 2501 grant.

On September 17, 2001, USDA awarded nearly $6 million to 28 educational institutions or community based organizations. Table 8 provides a listing of each of the institutions receiving one- year grants for the fiscal year 2001.

The structure of the 2501 Program raised serious questions about the future and long-term sustainability of this program and its impact on African American farmers. These concerns were:

- The 2501 Program was moving away from it original intentions of providing assistance to socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers through the provision of grants to 1890 land grant institutions including Tuskegee University, community-based organizations, Indian Tribal Community Colleges, Alaska Native Cooperative Colleges, and Hispanic Servicing Post-secondary educational institutions,
Table 8. 2501 Projects FY 2001

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Amount of Award</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Alabama</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alabama A &amp; M University</td>
<td>$276,822</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tuskegee University</td>
<td>$276,822</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Arkansas</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Arkansas Land &amp; Farm Development</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>California</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hmong American Community</td>
<td>$92,390</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agricultural Land-Based Training Assc.</td>
<td>$166,093</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Delaware</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delaware State University</td>
<td>$220,350</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Florida</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Florida A &amp; M University</td>
<td>$276,822</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Georgia</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Federation of Southern Cooperatives</td>
<td>$221,457</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Kentucky</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kentucky State University</td>
<td>$243,603</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Louisiana</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southern University &amp; A &amp; M College</td>
<td>$221,457</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Massachusetts</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trustees of Tufts College</td>
<td>$138,411</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mississippi</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alcorn State University</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Montana</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Intertribal Agriculture Council</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fort Peck Community College</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>New Mexico</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Housing and Economic Rural Opportunity</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Regents of New Mexico State Univ.</td>
<td>$276,822</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>North Carolina</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>North Carolina A &amp; T State University</td>
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<td>Fort Berthold Community College</td>
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<td>Tennessee State University</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Texas</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Prairie View A &amp; M University</td>
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<tr>
<td>The University of Texas-Pan American</td>
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Table 8. (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Amount of Award</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Virginia</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Virginia State University</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Washington</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Rural Community Development Resources</td>
<td>$221,457</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Wisconsin</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Growing Power, Inc</td>
<td>$110,728</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oneida Tribe of Indians of Wisconsin</td>
<td>$ 66,437</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: United States Department of Agriculture News Release No: 0177.01

- The new program did not allow for long-term relationships to be built with the targeted clients nor does it allow for a significant impact to be made.
- The eligibility requirements of the new program allows for any educational institution to apply for and receive a grant. Therefore, reducing the amount of funds available to those institutions that had a proven track record of assisting Black farmers.

**Summary**

The findings for this study indicated that the 2501 Program was administered by USDA National Office of Outreach. The major stakeholders in this program included the National office, USDA state and local offices, the 2501 projects, and socially disadvantaged farmers. The six participating 2501 projects were actively engaged in: (a) recruiting participants and reaching Black farmers, (b) providing one-on-one technical assistance, (c) disseminating information, (d) assisting farmers in applying for and receiving loans, (e) establishing cooperatives, and (f) exposing African American farmers to alternative enterprises.
The findings for this study also revealed that there are flaws in the implementation process of the 2501 Program. The 2501 Program was not implemented as planned due to erratic and unstable funding. The 2501 Program was not a line item in USDA budget; therefore, funding of the 27 projects was not guaranteed. Throughout the five-year period, the projects struggled with securing funding. The relationship between the participating small farm projects and their major stakeholders was a work in progress that was heavily influenced by the culture of the community and politics. The primary beneficiaries of the 2501 Program was USDA and socially, disadvantaged farmers and ranchers, in this case African American farmers.
CHAPTER VI: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This particular chapter is organized into four sections. Section one provides a summary of the research study. Discussion and implications of the findings are presented in section two. Recommendations are presented in section three. Section four discusses the implications for agricultural extension education targeting African American farmers.

Summary

The overall purpose of this research study was to provide an analysis of the Small Farmers Outreach Training and Technical Assistance Program (2501 Program) from 1994-2001 with implications for African American farmers. The 2501 Program is an agricultural education program that targets socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers. Socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers are defined as females, African Americans, American Indians, Asian or Pacific Islanders, and operators of Spanish origin. This particular study focused exclusively on the examination of the 2501 Program as it related to African American farmers and the 2501 small farm projects that provided services to this targeted clientele.

A review of the Census of Agriculture indicated that African Americans abandoned farming at a much greater rate than their White counterparts. This rapid rate of decline began in the 1920s. At that time there were more than 900,000 African American farm operators in the United States. In 1997, seventy-seven years
later, that number had fallen drastically to less than 19,000. The overall purpose of the 2501 Program was to reverse or slow down this decline. A secondary goal of the 2501 Program was to increase the awareness level of African American farmers regarding government agricultural programs. It was anticipated that this secondary goal would be accomplished by removing obstacles that prevented the full participation of African American farmers in agricultural programs. Obstacles that posed problems for African American farmers included:

- Having limited educational and management training in the areas of record-keeping and farm planning.
- Having few opportunities to gain experience with enterprises other than cotton or tobacco, therefore, restricting the African American farmer's ability to diversify and incorporate alternative enterprises into their farming operations.
- Experiencing racial discrimination and unethical loan practices by USDA agencies.
- Having little or no knowledge of existing government programs and being unable to fully understand and comprehend the rules and regulations governing agricultural programs.

It was envisioned that each of these issues would be addressed through the 2501 Program. In 1994, 27 small farm projects were established as a result of the 2501 Program. Institutions including South Carolina State University, Fort Valley State University, Tuskegee University, Alcorn State University, Lincoln University, and the Federation of Southern Cooperatives/Land Assistance Fund each received
five-year grants to provide technical and outreach assistance to African American farmers. The six small farm projects listed above were the focus of this research study. The experiences of the project staff from each of the participating six small farm projects provided evidence in assisting the researcher to: (a) realistically capture the internal dynamics of the 2501 Program at the project levels, (b) examine the implementation process of the 2501 Program and identify obstacles that impeded the successful implementation of the 2501 Program, and (c) determine if the 2501 Program had achieved its overall objective and if it had, what factors contributed to this success. The specific research questions for this study included:

- What were the salient features or key characteristics of selected small farm projects?
- What specific activities were the 2501 projects engaged in?
- To what extent was the 2501 Program implemented as planned and what factors impeded its successful implementation?
- What was the relationship between selected small farm projects and their major stakeholders/decision makers?
- Who benefited from the 2501 Program and in what ways?
- What was the impact of the 2501 projects?
- What does the future hold for the 2501 Program?

In order to address each of the above research questions, the data for this study were collected using the case study qualitative methodological approach. One-on-one interviews were completed with representatives from each of the six participating small farm projects. In addition, the incorporation of participant
observations and document analysis were also included in the data collection strategy.

Between 1994 and 2000, the 2501 Program was appropriated between $26.6 to $31.195 million dollars. The researcher was unable to obtain the exact dollar amount due to discrepancies in reports released by the National Office of Outreach. These funds provided grants to 27 small farm projects including the six farm projects participating in this study. The grants were used by the projects to hire staff, recruit participants, provided services to socially, disadvantaged farmers and ranchers, and to support the day-to-day operations of the projects. Each of the projects were actively engaged in the following activities: identifying and encouraging the participation of African American farmers in the 2501 Program, providing one-on-one technical assistance, disseminating information, assisting African American farmers in applying for and obtaining both agricultural and non-agricultural loans, establishing cooperatives, identifying suitable markets, and assisting the African American farmers in diversifying their farming operations by incorporating alternative enterprises.

The findings for this study also revealed that the six participating small farm projects were providing technical and outreach assistance in 173 counties in five different states. There were 27 specialists providing direct one-on-one assistance to approximately 918 farmers. It should be noted that the numbers provided by the 2501 projects were not reflective of the number of farmers that they were able to assist. The numbers were reflective of the data available at the time of data collection. In addition, several of the projects had lost staff members and their
targeted clientele was reduced because of unstable funding. Unstable funding caused several of the projects to temporarily shut down throughout the five-year funding period.

**Conclusions**

This research study was undertaken in an effort to understand the experiences of African Americans in U.S. agriculture, as well as to gain in-depth knowledge of the complexities involved in planning and implementing an agricultural extension education program for this targeted group. The 2501 Program was the focus of this study. The findings of this study revealed both strengths and weaknesses of the 2501 Program. The strength of this program was in its design and in the implementation of the individualized educational delivery system. By design, the researcher is referring to the individualization and uniqueness of each of the six small farm projects. Very little improvement is needed in these two aspects of the program. An additional strength of this program can be found in the commitment and dedication of the project staff working at the grassroots level. The project staff was passionate and intimately involved in the advancement of African American farmers. The weakness of the 2501 Program was in its implementation process at the program level. Based upon the data collected, the following conclusions were made:

- Problems did occur in the implementation of the 2501 Program. At the program level deficiencies were evident in the authorization and appropriation
of funds. These deficiencies severely impacted the disbursement and allocation of funds to the participating small farm projects.

- The staff of each of the small farm projects operated in an environment where the political and economic structure of the larger organization, USDA, defined the realities of their planning process. As a result, the planning process for the small farm projects became an exercise in negotiating interest within a given set of power relationships while navigating the political arena.

- The small farm projects were instrumental in keeping African American farmers on their land and their farming operations sustainable; however, they had very little power within the large framework of USDA and ensuring that their projects received guaranteed, timely funding throughout the five-year funding cycle.

- The success of the 2501 Program can be attributed to the design of the program and to the accomplishments made at the project level. The design of the 2501 Program allowed for each project to be implemented according to the needs of their targeted clientele. In addition, each of the six small farm projects implemented an innovative educational delivery system. This educational delivery system incorporated individualized learning and cultural relevant educational activities. Individualized learning was based on the idea that adults have “diverse levels of education, experiences, and expectations and when given the opportunity most adults prefer to be in charge of their own learning” (Sisco & Hiemstra, 1991). The individualized learning format also respected the identity of the farmers, acknowledges their experiences,
facilitates their goals, and involves them in planning, directing, and evaluating learning (Maehl, 2000).

In the case of the 2501 Program, specialists worked individually with African American farmers to diagnose their problems, increase their awareness, identify existing alternatives, and to implement a plan of action that is reflective of the farmer's individual needs. While working individually with African American farmers, the specialists also established rapport, built relationships, and gained the trust of this targeted group. Each of these factors was crucial in ensuring the long-term sustainability of African American farmers. The principles implemented by the six small farm projects were consistent with Rogers’ (1995) theory of the role of change agents in diffusing innovations. This particular theory involves: (a) developing a need for change, (b) establishing an information-exchange relationship, (c) diagnosing a problem, (d) creating an intent in the client to change, (e) translating that intent into action, (f) stabilizing adoption and preventing discontinuance, and (f) achieving a terminal relationship.

**Recommendations**

Based upon the findings of this study the following recommendations are suggested for five different areas: (1) recommendations for USDA specifically the National Office of Outreach, (2) recommendations for small farm projects at 1890 institutions, (3) recommendations for agricultural extension education programs at
the university level, (4) recommendations for African American farmers, and (5) recommendations for additional research.

Recommendations for USDA Specifically the National Office of Outreach

Four general recommendations are proposed for the National Office of Outreach.

Building Long-Term Relationships Between USDA & Small Farm Projects

The 2501 Program has achieved success in the provision of farmer-specific education and one-on-one technical assistance to African American farmers. Prior to the implementation of the 2501 Program, African American farmers were not receiving this type and quality of assistance from existing USDA programs. Due to the structure of many USDA programs at the county level, they were unable to provide similar services nor were they able to provide outreach and technical assistance of the same caliber that was available through the 2501 Program. USDA programs were also unable to successfully reach African American farmers. The 2501 Program may be the only realistic solution in ensuring the sustainability of African American farmers. A long-term collaborative relationship has to be formed between USDA and institutions servicing African American farmers. This relationship must be based on mutual trust, respect, and a commitment from all parties involved to the economic sustainability of African American farmers. Each organization must be held accountable for doing its part in ensuring the long-term survival of African American farmers.
Conducting Realistic Funding Assessments for the 2501 Program

The United States Department of Agriculture should be commended for its commitment to addressing some of the issues and concerns facing African American farmers, as well as for the funds that have been appropriated to the 2501 Program so far. However, despite the $26.6 million appropriated to the 2501 Program from 1994-2000, realistically, it was not enough to support 27 small farm projects. If a long-term and significant impact is to be made, guaranteed funding must be appropriated to the 2501 Program and to the National Office of Outreach. The 2501 Program was authorized for $10 million per year, however it has never been appropriated that amount. New small farm projects continued to be added to the 2501 Program, but the funding has not increase which depleted the financial resources available to those institutions who have a proven track record for working with African American farmers and who have made a significant impact. A realistic assessment of the amount of funds needed to adequately fund the existing small farm projects and the National Office of Outreach has to be made. These funds must be included as a line item in the USDA budget and be distributed to the small farm projects in a timely fashion. A review of the 2501 Program from 1994-2001, indicates that this has not occurred. Due to erratic funding practices, the 2501 projects were restricted in their abilities to fully service African American farmers. Despite the accomplishments that have been made, a lot more could have been accomplished if the small farm projects had received guaranteed and timely funding.
Improving the Reporting System at the National Level

A standardized reporting system did not exist at the program level. The participants indicated that they were required to submit monthly reports to the national office; however, they had no idea of the true impact of the 2501 Program or of activities that were occurring with other projects. A detailed summary report compiling the monthly reports and results from the audits could serve as crucial documentation to support the continuation of this program and the individual projects.

Releasing Consistent Information to the Public

In addition, to a standardized reporting system, there also has to be some degree of consistency in information released by the National Office of Outreach. The researcher was unable to determine the exact amount of money awarded to the 2501 Program from 1994-2000, because of the inconsistencies in reports received by this office.

Recommendations for Small Farm Projects at 1890 Institutions

The following recommendations are proposed for participating small farm projects:

Increase Their Participation in the Political Process

The small farm projects need to increase their involvement in the political process. Several of the participating projects were active in this process, while
others were unaware of the larger dynamics of the program and issues outside of their individual projects. Each staff member should be aware of the larger issues at stake. Each staff member should be consciously aware of the fact that the future of each individual project is contingent upon his or her abilities to successfully negotiate their interests and to navigate the political arena.

Maintaining Detail Documents Outlining their Accomplishments & Activities

While negotiating the interests of their projects and the interests of African American farmers, it is imperative that the leaders of the projects maintain detailed documentation outlining the impact of their individual projects and accomplishments. It is essential for each of the projects to have both quantitative and qualitative data to support their outreach and technical assistance efforts. This information could also serve as documentation to support the continuation of the overall 2501 Program and the small farm projects.

Recommendations for Agricultural Extension Education Programs at the University Level

There are a myriad of resources in the agricultural community that could be used to assist socially, disadvantaged farmers and ranchers and other small farmers. One potential resource can be found in the agricultural programs of 1890 and 1862 universities. Specifically, agricultural programs can be structured in a manner that allows students to gain realistic, hands-on- field experience by working closely with the local extension program to provide one-on-one technical and
outreach assistance to small farmers. For example, a professor who has been assigned the task of teaching an introductory program development/ agricultural extension course at an 1890 university could include in his or her curriculum, opportunities for students to work with the small farm program. The students could work closely with field specialists throughout the semester in servicing the needs of small farmers or the student could be assigned a small farmer to assist throughout the semester. It would be the responsibility of the student to identify the farmer’s needs, assist the farmer in diagnosing their problems and developing a workable solution. It is envisioned that this type of activity would occur under the supervision of the field agent. This type of activity would provide the student with realistic training and experience with the extension program. As students, we often read about program planning, rural development, and extension programs, however, we are rarely given the opportunity to apply what we learn in class in realistic situations.

**Recommendations for African American farmers**

The findings of this study revealed numerous insights about African American farmers. One of the most revealing insights was the resistance of African American farmers to diversify their farming operations. The six small farm projects indicated that African American farmers were stuck in tradition and were committed to the production of traditional crops such as cotton and tobacco. It is no longer economically feasible for African American farmers to produce traditional crops. If African American farmers are to remain a viable component in U.S. agriculture they must expand their operations into the production of alternative enterprises.
Vegetable production, catfish farming and other niche markets have proven to be successful for African American farmers.

**Recommendations for Additional Research**

Three general recommendations are proposed for additional research.

**An Analysis of the Experiences of other Socially Disadvantaged Farmers Participating in the 2501 Program**

This particular study focused on the analysis of the 2501 Program from the perspective of African American farmers. A similar analysis needs to be completed to assess the experiences of other small farm projects participating in the 2501 Program that provided services to other socially, disadvantaged farmers and ranchers. Research in this area could contribute to improving and enhancing the 2501 Program, as well as provide additional insight into the experiences of farmers falling into the following categories: female, American Indians, Asian or Pacific Islanders and operators of Spanish Origin.

**Analysis of the Political Aspects of the 2501 Program at the National Level**

A thorough analysis of the internal dynamics of the 2501 Program at the National level needs to be undertaken. Research examining the political aspect of the program, as well as the perceptions and experiences of those working at the National Level is essential in understanding the overall program.
Evaluation of the Effectiveness of the New One-Year Funding Cycle

An evaluation of the effectiveness of the new policies and procedures governing the 2501 Program is an additional area of research that needs to be reviewed. As indicated in Chapter 5, the funding cycle for the 2501 Program is an annual process. The five-year funding cycle is no longer being utilized. This policy will have little impact on existing projects; however for those projects that received grants for the first time during FY 2001, this policy will have significant impact. The question that was raised: Could these new small farm projects make a significant impact on their targeted audience in a year or are they simply wasting resources by funding these new projects? An examination should be undertaken at the end of the one-year funding cycle to determine the impact of each of the new projects.

Implications for Agricultural Extension Education Targeting African American Farmers

This particular study was focused on an analysis of an agricultural extension education program targeting African American farmers. Various components of this research study can be used to effectively and efficiently plan, design, and implement agricultural extension education programs for African American farmers. This particular study revealed numerous insights regarding African American farmers participation habits, learning needs and preferences, and strategies or techniques that can be used to ensure their sustainability. This study also revealed that learning activities targeting African American farmers are more effective when these activities
are individualized, farmer specific, and based on the needs of African American farmers.

In addition to the items listed in the preceding paragraph, this research study also has implications that are directly related to the sustainability of the 2501 Program and to African American farmers. Prior to the implementation of the 2501 Program, African American farmers did not have access to valuable agricultural extension education services in the areas of farm management and production. In addition, African American farmers were denied assistance in the completion of difficult loan applications, exposure to alternative enterprises, and their participation in government agricultural programs was restricted due to racism and a lack of awareness. The 2501 Program has assisted African Americans farmers in overcoming these barriers and has provided valuable agricultural extension education services to this targeted group. If this program fails to continue or if the type and quality of services provided through the 2501 Program is no longer available, the impact on African American farmers will be severe. Thousands of African American farmers will be forced to abandon agriculture and thousands of acres of Black owned farmland will be lost. The African American farmer may become extinct and the progress made over the last decade will have been in vain.
APPENDIX A. INTRODUCTORY LETTER TO SMALL FARM PROJECTS
As you are aware the Small Farmers Outreach Training and Technical Assistance Program, commonly referred to as the 2501 Program has been in existence for over six years. Since its inception, the 2501 Program has provided grants to historically Black land-grant institutions and other organizations servicing minority farmers. Through the provision of grants, the 2501 Program at these institutions of learning have been instrumental in reversing the decline of African American farmers and ensuring their sustainability through aggressive outreach and technical assistance.

As a requirement for a Doctor of Philosophy degree in Agricultural Education and Studies at Iowa State University, I have chosen to examine the impact of the 2501 Program on rural communities and the African American farmer for my doctoral research. The purpose of this letter is to request your participation in this study, arrange for an on-site visit, and to request information (e.g. progress reports, newsletters) about your XXXX University's Small Farm Project.

As the researcher, my primary goal is to examine the processes that XXXX University Small Farm Project has used in reversing the decline of minority farmers. The objectives of this study are to:

- create a profile of selected small farm projects,
- identify the major achievements that have been made by selected small farm projects,
- identify the factors that have contributed to these achievements,
- identify the major problems and setbacks that the 2501 Program has or is facing, and
- Identify your perceptions regarding the 2501 Program and the future of African American farmers.

It is anticipated that the objectives of this research study will be accomplished through document analysis and one-on-one interviews with project staff at selected universities. The interviews will be completed between June 2001 and August 2001. The estimate time for the interview is approximately two hours. The interview will be
audiotaped. In addition, I would also like to obtain descriptive information on your program. This information will assist me in creating a profile of 1890 land-grant institutions and non-governmental organizations participating in the 2501 Program. Information will be needed concerning: the type and frequency of outreach and technical assistance that is provided by your project and descriptive information about the farmers enrolled in the project (e.g. # of farmers, educational background, age, farming experience and etc.)

Participation in this study will not be completely anonymous. Descriptions of each selected small farm project will be provided in the final report. However, in situations that involve the perceptions of the participants, a pseudonym will be assigned and no identifying characteristics will be used in reporting that portion of the study. As the primary researcher, I will analyze the responses and maintain the files.

Participation in this study is voluntary and you may withdraw and/or not answer questions at anytime.

Your involvement in this study is highly appreciated. I will be contacting you within the next several days to schedule an appointment for an on-site visit as well as an interview. I would also like to request copies of any progress reports or newsletters that you may have regarding XXX Small Farm Project.

If you have any questions or concerns, I can be reached at 515-292-8215 or by email at thargrov@iastate.edu. Thanking you in advance for your cooperation and your assistance in the completion of this study.

Sincerely,

Tasha M. Hargrove, Ph.D. Student
Agricultural Education & Studies
Iowa State University
APPENDIX B. INTERVIEW GUIDE
A Case Study Analysis of the Small Farmers Outreach Training and Technical Assistance Program: Implications for Agricultural Extension Education Targeting African American Farmers

Interview Guide

Date:
Identification # or Code Name:
Time of Interview:
Location of Interview:
Interview Conducted by:

Section I

I. Description of Interviewee
   1. How long have you been working with the project?
   2. Could you please describe your involvement with this project?
   3. What are your primarily responsibilities?

II. History and Background of the 2501 Program
   1. Would you please describe how the 2501 Program originated?
   2. Why was there a need for this program?
   3. Who were the main participants?
   4. What specific activities contributed to this program being implemented?

III. Perceptions of the 2501 Program
   1. What problems have occurred with this program?
   2. How have these problems affected the implementation of program activities?
   3. How is the National Office of Outreach addressing these problems?
   4. What areas of the 2501 Program need to be changed?
   5. Why should this program continue? Why should it receive full funding?
   6. What do you believe will happen if this program does not continue?
Section II: Description of [name of university] Small Farm Projects

I. Perceptions of Small Farm Project

1. What problems are facing African American farmers in your targeted area? How can these problems be solved?
2. What are the needs of the African American farmer in your targeted area? How are these needs being identified?
3. Would you please describe the farming operation of one of your clients that have experienced success? How did you assist them?
4. Would you please describe a situation in which one of your clients have not experienced success? What do you think what wrong?
5. What do you feel is the strength of [name of university] small farm project?
6. What has the project achieved for African American farmers in your area?
7. What specific strategies or activities have this program implemented to help minority farmers?
8. How has the 2501 Program contributed to your university ability to reverse the decline of minority farmers?
9. Are farmers accepting the recommended farm management practices?
   • What role has this played in reversing the decline in the numbers of African American Farmers?
   • What are the recommended practices made by small farm projects?
10. What do you think the future holds for African American farmers?

II. Descriptive Data

1. What are the objectives of [name of the university] project?
2. What is your targeted area?
3. How many farmers are enrolled in [name of the university] project?
   Full time farmers?
   Part-time farmers?
4. How many females are participating in the [name of the university] project?
5. How many non- African Americans are participating in the project?
6. What is the average age of the farmer?
7. What is their educational level?
8. How much experience do they have in farming?
9. How many workshops or seminars have been completed and in what areas?
10. How many people are on the staff and what are their responsibilities?
APPENDIX C. INFORMATION STATEMENT
Information Statement

Project Title: A Case Study Analysis of the Small Farmers Outreach Training and Technical Assistance Project (2501 Program): Implications for Agricultural Extension Education Targeting African American Farmers

Researcher: Tasha M. Hargrove
Doctoral Candidate
Agricultural Education & Studies
Iowa State University

1. The purpose of this research study is to examine the processes that [name of university] are using to reverse the decline of minority farmers.

2. The objectives of this study are to: (1) create a profile of selected small farm projects, (2) identify the major achievements that have been made by selected small farm projects, (3) identify the factors that have contributed to these achievements, (4) identify the major problems and setbacks that the 2501 Program has experienced, and (5) identify your perceptions regarding the 2501 Program and the future of the African American farmer.

3. If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to complete an interview with the researcher. The estimate time for the interview is two hours. The interview will be audio taped. The audiotapes and transcriptions will be numbered for identification. The researcher will analyze the responses and maintain the files.

4. Participation in this study will not be completely anonymous. Descriptions of each selected small farm project will be provided in the final report. However, in situations that involve the perceptions of the participants, a pseudonym will be assigned and no identifying characteristics will be used in reporting that portion of the study.

5. Participation is voluntary and you may withdraw and/or not answer questions at any time.

I voluntarily consent to participate in this project.

Participant's signature.
APPENDIX D. HUMAN SUBJECTS APPROVAL
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Last name of Principal Investigator: Hargrove</th>
<th>168</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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### Checklist for Attachments and Time Schedule

The following are attached (please check):

12. ☑ Letter or written statement to subjects indicating clearly:
   a) the purpose of the research
   b) the use of any identifier codes (names, #’s), how they will be used, and when they will be removed (see item 17)
   c) an estimate of time needed for participation in the research
   d) if applicable, the location of the research activity
   e) how you will ensure confidentiality
   f) in a longitudinal study, when and how you will contact subjects later
   g) that participation is voluntary; nonparticipation will not affect evaluations of the subject

13. ☐ Signed consent form (if applicable)

14. ☐ Letter of approval for research from cooperating organizations or institutions (if applicable)

15. ☑ Data-gathering instruments

16. Anticipated dates for contact with subjects:
   - **First contact:**
     - June 1, 2001
   - **Last contact:**
     - September 1, 2001

17. If applicable: anticipated date that identifiers will be removed from completed survey instruments and/or audio or visual tapes will be erased:

18. Signature of Departmental Executive Officer: Patricia M. Keith  
   Date: 4/26/01  
   Department or Administrative Unit: Ed. Sci.

19. Decision of the University Human Subjects Review Committee:
   - ☑ Project approved
   - ☐ Project not approved
   - ☐ No action required

   Name of Human Subjects in Research Committee Chair: Patricia M. Keith  
   Date: 5-7-01  
   Signature of Committee Chair: Patricia M. Keith
REFERENCES CITED


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Grim, V. (1996). Black participation in the Farmers Home Administration and


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