

USU Extension Receives Grant for Training Next Generation of Farmers

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Utah State

University Extension recently received a grant worth \$599,615 from the Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program to help increase the number of beginning farmers in the Mountain West.

The grant, provided by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Institute of Food and Agriculture, will be used to establish three farm incubator sites across Utah that will include space for demonstration gardens. The grant will also cover workshops and training designed to increase understanding, knowledge and success for future and current farmers.

According to Kynda Curtis, USU Extension food and agricultural marketing specialist, this grant comes at an important time for Utah agriculture.

"Increasingly, farmers nationwide are reaching retirement without a transition plan to keep their businesses operating," Curtis said. "In Utah, the average specialty crop farmer is 60 years old – four years older than the national average. That's why USU is providing programming and services to increase the number of new producers."

This project places a special focus on Native American and refugee beginning farmers as well as high school students involved in FFA and 4-H. A total of 65 new refugee farmers, 16 Native American farmers, and 250 agricultural students will be served by the project.

USU Extension will partner with New Roots, an agriculture and food access program that already provides farmer training for refugees and immigrants. USU Extension will use this grant to further expand New Roots by providing additional land and the resources needed to make this program accessible to additional refugee farmers in the Salt Lake area.

Additionally, two incubator sites in rural areas will be focused on assisting Native American farmers with their operations. High school students involved with FFA and 4-H will receive instruction at farm demonstration sites and will receive training for and assistance with urban farming projects.

"This project will lead to increased understanding of small-scale farming systems and provide important economic development and access to fresh produce in rural areas," Curtis said. "Leveraging the agricultural expertise of USU Extension faculty and staff, and drawing on their statewide resources, this collaboration will have positive benefits for generations to come."

For more information about USU Extension programs, visit [.](#)

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