Situation:

Gulf Coast Small Farms and Alternative Enterprises (GCSFAE) is an initiative created in 2013 by the extension faculty from the Northwest District and the Faculty of UF/IFAS WFREC. It was created to better utilize the WFREC resources by developing relevant hands on training for small farms and alternative enterprises in northwest Florida. The spring field day was the kickoff event for the initiative.

Objective:

The event will attract a minimum of 30 small farmers or interested participants. Producers will gain knowledge on topics of drip irrigation, food safety, trap cropping, construction of a floating garden, and protected agriculture. The event's evaluation will gather valuable information considering future training topics for GCSFAE.

Methods:

The field day began with WFREC faculty and extension faculty laying out the goals of the initiative for the attendees. The field day was a half-day training that consisted of field stops with an emphasis on demonstration. The stops were drip irrigation, trap cropping, floating garden construction, food safety, and protected agriculture.

Results and Conclusion:

A total of 87 people attended the event. The evaluation indicated 76% gained knowledge on drip irrigation, 81% gained knowledge of trap cropping, 76% gained knowledge of floating garden construction, 78% gained knowledge on food safety regulations, and 73% gained knowledge of protected agriculture techniques. 23 suggestions were mentioned as possible future training topics on the evaluation. The attendance and success far exceeded the expectations of the GCSFAE group. The field day will be a catalyst for future events held by the GCSFAE team.