Production Techniques for Beginning or Improving a Small Scale Agricultural Operation

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Since 2002, Columbia County has seen a forty-three percent increase in the number of farms. Today there are over seven hundred farms that are less than fifty acres in size. One of the most common questions asked by these landowners is “What can I do with my land”? To answer this question, a program called Living on a Few Acres was developed. **Objective:** The program provides an introduction to basic production techniques for individuals interested in beginning or improving a small scale agricultural operation. **Method:** A monthly meeting is held at the county extension office covering the topics; small farm management, alternative enterprises, vegetable crops, backyard poultry, pasture management, beef and small ruminants, pond management, equine management, organic production, fruit and nut crops, wildlife habitat, and marketing. Each participant receives a notebook with materials covering each topic. **Results:** The program started with twenty-eight participants in January and has grown to sixty-three as of May. Pre/post evaluations have shown that participants have increased their knowledge by thirty-six percent on topics currently covered. **Conclusion:** Due to the positive response of this program, the agent will provide this program again next year and will modify or add new topics based on participant evaluations.

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