Hmong, a people group from Laos, a neighbor to Vietnam, immigrated to the U.S.A. due to persecution after supporting the U.S.A. during the Vietnam War. Local Agents were enlisted to help these new Florida residents adapt their native subsistence farming practices to new climate and soil. A five month series of two hour Saturday programs, translated into participants’ native language, ensued. Objectives: 100% of participants increase awareness of modern farming practices and opportunities in Florida by one measure or more. Methods: farm visits, presentations, demonstrations, interactive question periods, and displays; a collaborative effort of 4 Agents, 2 Specialists, local USDA and a successful Asian vegetable grower. Topics: vegetable production, co-ops, Worker Protection Standards, pesticides, insects, diseases, and USDA resources. Results: 100% (n=9) increased awareness and understanding of agricultural concepts and opportunities. 89% Plan to apply the concepts learned. 78% Strongly agreed the series will help them make better decisions regarding their small farm. 67% Expected increased sales to others as a result of the series. One grower joined the Polk Small Farms Advisory Committee and participated in a video on County small farms. Evaluated through discussion with group leaders and an end of series printed evaluation (n=9). 75 contacts over series. Conclusions: Reaching non-traditional clientele is challenging. Expectations on either side of the lectern need to be communicated clearly. Requested content was delivered, yet program attendance suffered attrition over time and a low response to evaluation attempts. Agents will continue work with growers and gauge interest in a second series.

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