The Treasure Coast of Florida has seen many changes in the last few years which have greatly impacted the agricultural industry. Some of those changes have given rise to a diverse group of small-acreage farmers that need access to research-based knowledge that will assist them in making more informed decisions. Extension agents in the region expanded their programming to include these non-traditional farmers by creating the Treasure Coast Small Farms Working Group of Indian River, St. Lucie, Okeechobee and Martin Counties.

Understanding the needs of small-acreage farmers led the extension working group to host a series of “Feed-the-Farmer” potluck and educational seminars where participants had the opportunity to meet with other farmers, discuss various issues, exchange ideas, elicit assistance and form cooperative groups in order to share labor and reduce costs. Dinners were scheduled every two months and the farmers brought different types of food that included, and highlighted, the products that they grew and raised on their farms. Discussions brought about topics that the farmers were interested in and extension agents presented new material about those topics at the next dinner. At the request of the participants, farm visits were also included with the same potluck-seminar format.

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