

2009 Annual Report Summary for Delaware State University and the Combined DSU, UDEL and UMES Program

The level 1 and level 2 professional development program for Delaware and the Eastern Shore of Maryland is well on its way to completing the goals of 1) Using SARE trainings to educate agriculture professionals so that they can better disseminate sustainable farming practices throughout the area, 2) Encouraging farmers to use their knowledge gained and implement it on their farms and 3) Providing SARE grant-writing education. The trainings cover a wide range of sustainable concepts, but have three topics of focus: reduced tillage systems in vegetable production, season extension, and small-scale ornamental production practices. To date, there have been seven training sessions and workshops attended by 72 Extension educators and other agricultural service providers and an impressive 187 farmers. Highlights of these events include two farm bus tours, demonstration plot tours, and a workshop discussing a new technology for season extension. The immediate feedback from all events was extremely positive and follow-up surveys will be done in the third year of the project to determine the extent that information gained at the trainings was distributed to farmers. Surveys will also determine the number of farmers who have adopted newly-learned practices on their farms, approximately how many acres they are implementing new practices on, and on-farm benefits resulting from the new practices. The majority of the SARE grant-writing education took place through 9 presentations and workshops and one-on-one farm/office visits. 149 farmers and 74 extension educators and other agriculture service providers learned about SARE grant opportunities through the outreach efforts of the Professional Development Program.