Inventory and Evaluation of Farmer and Rancher Training Programs in New Mexico

Assessment, Planning & Evaluation Lab (APEL)

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Assessment, Planning & Evaluation Lab (APEL)

- Assist communities and organizations in planning and achieving their programmatic goals.

- Contribute to the health and social well-being of communities throughout New Mexico.

- Expertise:
  ◦ Health assessment, program planning and evaluation, community-based participatory research, research design, qualitative and quantitative methods, and reporting and dissemination via scientific and non-scientific venues.

https://hsc.unm.edu/population-health/research-centers/assessment-planning/

Farmer/Rancher Training Programs in NM

- Concerns about the decreasing number of farmers and increasing public demand for local products.

- Farmer training programs have emerged throughout NM to increase the number of local, small farmers.

- Training a new generation of farmers is necessary to support and strengthen local food systems and communities in NM.

Need for the Project

- Federal and state agencies, as well as private foundations, community organizations and individuals across NM invest in farmer and rancher training and apprenticeship programs.

- A state-level inventory and evaluation of farmer and rancher training programs has not been conducted.

- Information on the multilevel impact of these programs on agriculture and communities across NM is lacking.

Research Questions

- **Phase 1:** Inventory and Case Study (April-Aug 2024)

  1. How many farmer/rancher training programs are being implemented in NM?

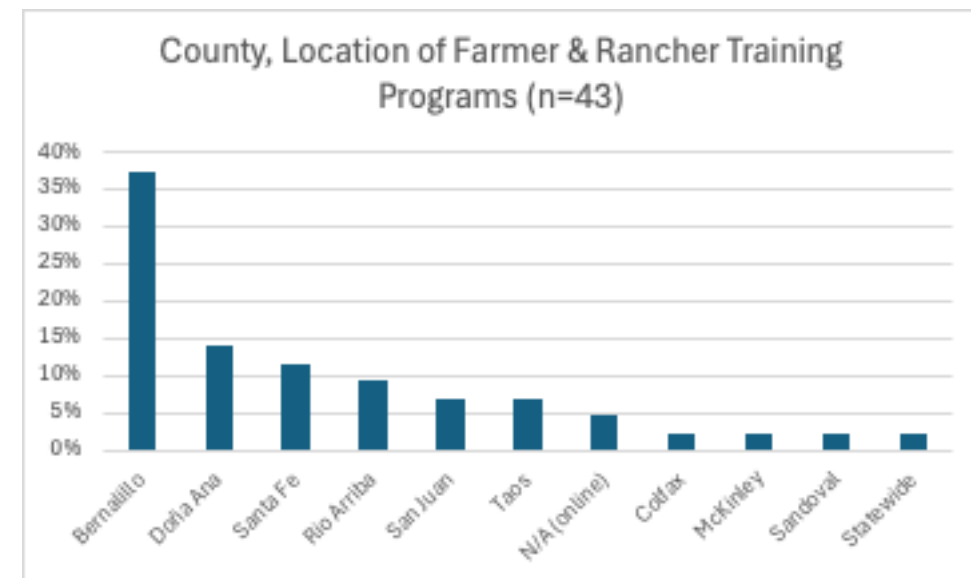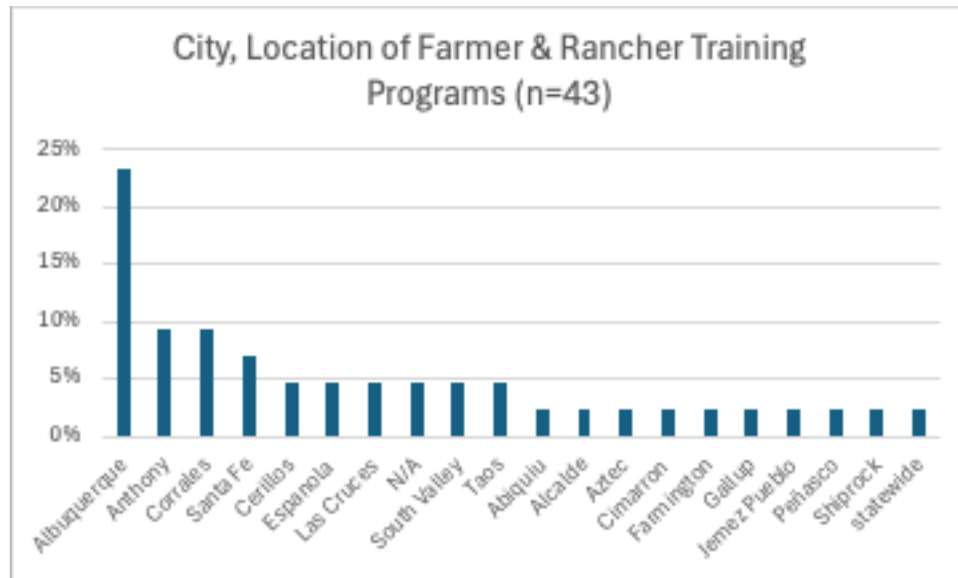 2. What are the approaches, curricula, and delivery methods used by training programs in NM?

- **Phase 2:** Multi-Level Evaluation (2025)

  1. Are NM communities benefitting from or bearing the burden of training programs?

Phase 1: Inventory of Programs Results

RQ1: how many farmer/rancher training programs are being implemented in NM?
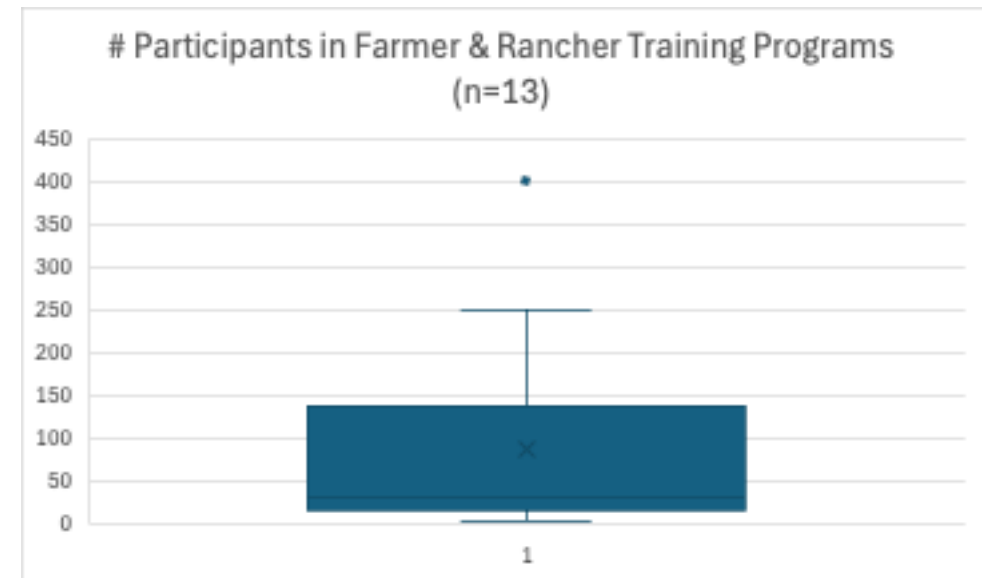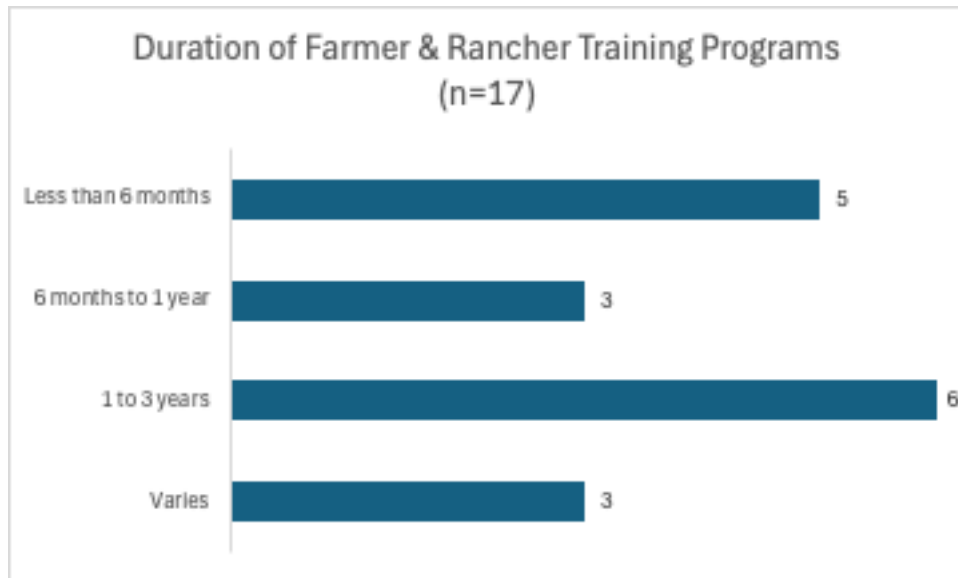
Phase 1: Inventory of Programs (Results)

- Inventory of NM farmer and rancher training programs

  ◦ [Publicly Available Inventory](#)
    ◦ 43 total programs, 5 of which are Food Corps in different locations

City, Location of Farmer & Rancher Training Programs (n=43)

County, Location of Farmer & Rancher Training Programs (n=43)

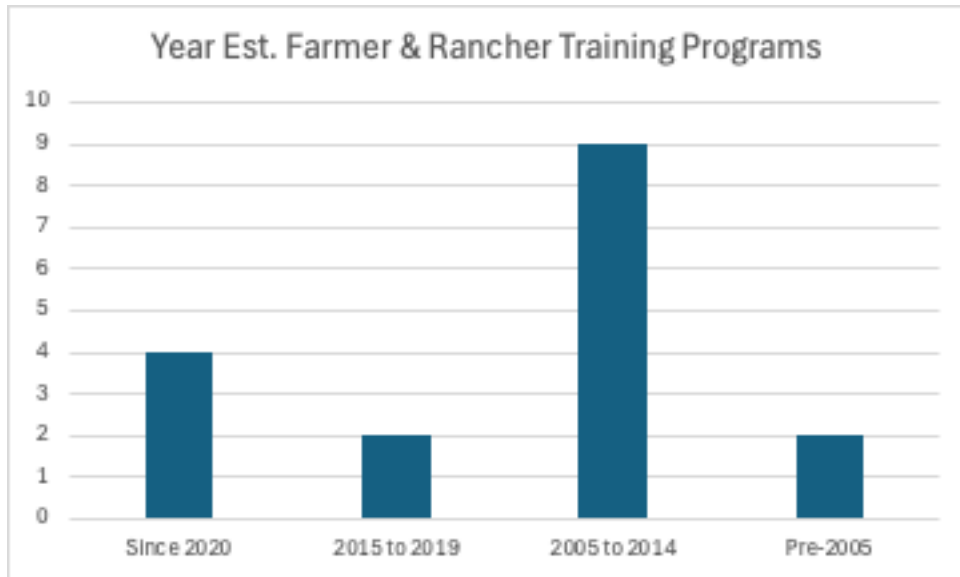# Phase 1: Inventory of Programs (Results)

- Qualtrics Results

  ◦ 17 total participants, providing detailed information about their programs

Duration of Farmer & Rancher Training Programs (n=17)

Category	Count
Less than 6 months	5
6 months to 1 year	3
1 to 3 years	6
Varies	3

Participants in Farmer & Rancher Training Programs (n=13)

Phase 1: Inventory of Programs (Results)

Year Est. Farmer & Rancher Training Programs

- Since 2020: 4
- 2015 to 2019: 2
- 2005 to 2014: 9
- Pre-2005: 2

Still Active? Farmer & Rancher Training Programs (n=17)
- No
- Yes

Using Federal Grants? Farmer & Rancher Training Programs (n=17)
- Yes
- No

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Phase 1: Inventory of Programs Results

RQ2: what are the approaches, curricula, and delivery methods used by training programs in NM?

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Phase 1: Inventory of Programs (Results)

Training Methods: Farmer & Rancher Training Programs

Experiential and Hands-On Learning

- **Hands-On Agriculture, Traditional, and Cultural Lessons**: Immersing participants in activities related to traditional farming and cultural practices.

- **Farmer-to-Farmer Learning Exchanges**: Facilitating peer-to-peer learning opportunities between experienced and novice farmers.

- **On-Farm Demonstrations**: Providing live demonstrations to expose participants to various farming practices and production systems.

- **Independent Project Development**: Encouraging participants to apply what they've learned through personal projects on a farm or garden plot.

Phase 1: Inventory of Programs (Results)

Training Methods: Farmer & Rancher Training Programs

Classroom-Based Learning and Education

- Lectures: Delivering structured learning through expert-led presentations, storytelling, discussions, and interactive exercises.

- Webinars and Online Learning: Offering digital learning opportunities with assignments, forum discussions, and live sessions.

- Business Planning and Management Classes: Teaching participants about business concepts, market analysis, and farm management.

Phase 1: Inventory of Programs (Results)

Training Methods: Farmer & Rancher Training Programs

Culturally Affirming and Holistic Education

- Indigenous Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK): Integrating traditional farming and cultural knowledge into the educational model.

- Holistic Healing and Wellness: Incorporating traditional wellness practices, mental health therapy, and trauma-informed care into the curriculum.

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Phase 1: Case Studies Results

RQ2: what are the approaches, curricula, and delivery methods used by training programs in NM? What are the best practices?

Phase 1: Case Study Participant

- <u>Farmer & Rancher Training Case Study Report</u>

- Two case studies using 12 interviews were completed:
  - Bernalillo County: Grow the Growers (Albuquerque)
  - Center for Southwest Culture: CODECE and ¡Sembrando Salud! (Albuquerque)

- Shared values
  - Supporting underserved, underrepresented populations in farming through hands-on, sustainable agricultural education
  - Providing personalized curriculum through mentorship, individual training plans, or guided projects
  - Emphasizing sustainability, community resilience, and food sovereignty, aiming to empower farmers to become more self-sufficient and connected to the land

Current Evaluation Methods

How farmer & Rancher training programs are evaluating themselves

Written Surveys: Collecting structured feedback from participants through standardized questions.

Pre- and Post-Tests: Used to assess the change in knowledge, skills or attitudes before and after participation.

Participant Surveys & Self-Assessment: Direct feedback from attendees about their experience, satisfaction, learning outcomes, and behavior change.

Group Discussions: Gathering qualitative data through group discussions, which are recorded for analysis.

Formative Evaluations: Conducted during the program to assess and improve the curriculum and teaching effectiveness.

Summative Evaluations: Conducted after the program to assess the overall effectiveness, impact and outcomes of the program.

Use of SOPs (Standard Operating Procedures) & Trackers: Tracking how well participants implement skills in real-world situations.

Participation & Completion Rates: How much participation occurred can help evaluate program engagement and impact.

Wellness Intake/Exit Surveys: Surveys conducted at the beginning and end of the program to measure changes in participants' well-being or other specific areas of focus.

Photovoice: A participatory method where participants use photography to capture their experiences and provide feedback, often used for visual storytelling and deeper reflection.

Feedback from Participants: Gathering specific feedback from participants to understand their perspectives and engagement.

Feedback from Trainers: Collecting feedback from those facilitating the program to evaluate their own effectiveness and the program's overall flow.

Evaluation of Mission Statements: Ensuring that the program is aligned with its mission and goals, and evaluating if its impact is in line with its intended purpose.