

Alabama A&M University's Small Farms Research Center

with E'licia L. Chaverest

Talking points

Knowledge

1. What percentage of farms in the USA are classified as small farms?
2. Name three types of extreme weather that are likely to make life difficult for small farmers as the effects of the climate crisis intensify.

Comprehension

3. How can small farms benefit young people in their communities?
4. Explain some of the main challenges that face limited resource, socially disadvantaged farmers.

Application

5. What could you do to help a socially disadvantaged farmer who cannot afford to buy a new piece of machinery for their farm?
6. Imagine that you are organising a conference with the Small Farms Research Center (SFRC). Who would you invite to speak at this conference and what would you want them to talk about?

Analysis

7. At their conferences, the SFRC brings socially disadvantaged small farmers from across the state of Alabama and beyond together in one space. What are the motivations behind this?
8. Factory farming exists because there is a large demand for cheap meat. Factory farms meet this demand by producing huge quantities of meat. What are some of the problems with factory farming? How might factory farms affect small, local farms?

Evaluation

9. How important do you think experimental learning is? Why do you think it is a primary focus of the SFRC's outreach?
10. Changing weather patterns and global crises like the COVID-19 pandemic are making things much harder for small farmers. Despite the hard work of the SFRC, many small farms may struggle to survive. How important do you think it is to protect small farms?

Activities

1. Design an outreach programme to help socially disadvantaged small farmers connect with their communities.

Small farmers are important people in many local communities. They provide jobs to local people, support the economy, and help to inspire young people. Maintaining a connection with their community is also beneficial for the farmers, as local people will develop trust and a sense of loyalty towards them.

Some limited resource, socially disadvantaged farmers may struggle to form and maintain this connection. So much time is taken up by the necessities of farming life that there may well be no spare time for engaging with the local community. This can have a negative effect on small farms and reduce the amount of support they receive from local people.

Imagine that you work for the SFRC. You have seen that small farms with a strong connection to their local communities tend to be more resilient and successful. You have also noticed that limited resource, socially disadvantaged farmers have less opportunity to build this connection with their communities.

Design a programme that will help these limited resource, socially disadvantaged farmers to nurture and maintain a strong connection with their community. How can small farms increase their engagement with local people? How can they make themselves known to the local community? How can they support young people to help build relationships with local families? There are all sorts of ways that small farms could do this, from updating their branding and advertising to running volunteer days and workshops.

Create a PowerPoint presentation that outlines how your programme will work. Talk about the benefits of increased community engagement and why it is particularly important for limited resource, socially disadvantaged farmers. Outline the ways in which your programme will help small farmers engage with their communities and think about how you will support small farmers through this process.

2. How could you help a farmer?

Imagine you met a farmer at a farmer's market. What questions would you ask them about their farm and farming practices? List all the different ways that you could help them in their mission of running a successful and sustainable small farm.

More resources

- Visit the SFRC website for more information:
www.aamu.edu/academics/colleges/agricultural-life-natural-sciences/research-interests-publications/small-farms-research-center
- The SFRC has a YouTube channel that you can visit to explore more of its research ([Small Farms Research Center AAMU - YouTube](#)).
- It also has a Facebook page that you can use to keep up to date with the latest developments at the Center ([Small Farms Research Center - AAMU | Facebook](#)).
- You can follow the SFRC on Instagram, too:
@ www.instagram.com/smallfarms1996