

**SUCCESS** in

# MASSACHUSETTS

## Financial Management Practices to Rapidly Evaluate and Respond to New Situations

Project Director: Dorothy Supot, Co-Project Director: Jeffrey Cole - TSNE-The Carrot Project



Photo of Greenfield Highland Beef  
courtesy of Janet Steward

*“(In reference to the trainer) ...Has given the tools we need to manage our books ourselves which, in turn, has given us insights that are helping us reshape our business for profitability”*

*– Connecticut Farmer*

**Situation:** The agriculture sector continues to experience what is referred to as “COVID fatigue.” that results from farmers’ increased workload from their need to focus on disruptions that began during COVID, such as supply chain, labor, transitioning to new and/or online marketing channels, and other issues requiring their increased attention and efforts. Since 2016, The Carrot Project has delivered the Financial Management Calendar webinar where participants have consistently asked for guidance in implementing the different tasks that empowers participants to plan and pivot quickly to reduce risks arising from constantly fluctuating working conditions, this established the foundation for the current project. While the target audience was small farmers (particularly those converting production and marketing systems to pursue new markets) and value-added producers living in **Southern New England (MA, RI, and CT)**, farmers participated from the South and the Pacific Northwest as well.

**Outcomes:** This project, led by **Dorothy Supot**, trained farmers to respond quickly to stress from rapidly changing business environments to mitigate those risks. The team offered two live, interactive trainings of four sessions each that were delivered online, and recorded for self-paced review or follow-up by registrants. These were supplemented with webinars and 1:1 business advising post-training. As a result, participants became knowledgeable in three overall risk management topics established as key practices that successful farmers regularly implement: 1. Maintaining up-to-date records and tailored recordkeeping systems; 2. Using financial information to determine cost of production, create financial benchmarking, and manage assets; 3. Comparing budgets to actuals to analyze input decisions in real time and manage assets/inputs to improve net income.

**Impacts:** Overall, the project was successful. One hundred percent of responding participants increased their understanding of one or more skills and implemented one or more areas of improvement to their financial record keeping systems. An additional unexpected result was the participation of farmers from outside the service region. Perhaps

*Continued on next page...*

...continued from previous page

this is an indication that local messaging provided by TSNE-The Carrot Project around financial recordkeeping and risk management is being shared nationwide, and that the positive reputation fostered by the group is enough to entice farmers to trust and participate in the trainings despite being located in other regions. Overall, the group was informed by business advisors and clients that supply chain, labor, and sales channel issues that began during COVID continued to be significant management issues, with farmers having to spend more time managing these elements of their operations than prior to COVID. Coupled with adapting to climate change, these factors further increase farmer stress and fatigue. All indications are that these stressors are likely to be an ongoing issue for some time and may continue to impact farmers' capacity to manage additional changes to their business planning activities, at least in the short term.

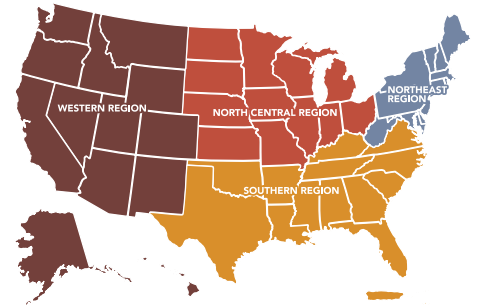
# SUCCESS in EVERY STATE

## Extension Risk Management Education

Extension Risk Management Education is delivered through four regional centers that provide grant funding and leadership within their regions.

Projects are producer-focused, outcomes-based and encourage public-private partnerships. Funded projects must identify targeted outcomes that will help producers manage risk and then describe how the project will measure those outcomes.

Extension Risk Management Education has funded innovative programs that have generated tangible outcomes for producers in every state. Commitment to funding outcomes, providing transparent accountability, and encouraging collaboration allow you to view the accomplishments of all funded projects on our website: [ExtensionRME.org](http://ExtensionRME.org)



**NORTHEAST  
EXTENSION  
RISK  
MANAGEMENT  
EDUCATION**

**University of Delaware  
Cooperative Extension**

(302) 831-6540

[nerme.org](http://nerme.org)



UNIVERSITY OF DELAWARE  
**COOPERATIVE  
EXTENSION**



**SOUTHERN  
EXTENSION  
RISK  
MANAGEMENT  
EDUCATION**

**University of Arkansas  
Division of Agriculture**

(501) 671-2165

[srmec.uada.edu](http://srmec.uada.edu)



**WESTERN  
EXTENSION  
RISK  
MANAGEMENT  
EDUCATION**

**Washington State  
University Extension**

(509) 477-2168

[westrme.wsu.edu](http://westrme.wsu.edu)



WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY  
**EXTENSION**



**NORTH CENTRAL  
EXTENSION  
RISK  
MANAGEMENT  
EDUCATION**

**University of Nebraska-  
Lincoln Extension**

(402) 472-1742

[ncerme.org](http://ncerme.org)



**EXTENSION**

**USDA** National Institute of Food and Agriculture  
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Extension Risk Management Education is supported by the USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture.



**EXTENSION RISK MANAGEMENT EDUCATION**

[EXTENSIONRME.org](http://EXTENSIONRME.org)