

Celebrating 20 Years of Annie's Project

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Abstract

In 2003, Ruth Hambleton established Annie's Project with a \$2,000 grant from Deb Rood's NC-RME Women in Agriculture program. From the humble start of one class in Illinois to today, Annie's Project has grown to 38 states and one US Territory. This poster will highlight the growth of Annie's Project and share the educational impacts of its programs. Annie's Project uses a methodology that builds confidence, develops networks, and creates lifelong learners among women farmers, ranchers, and growers. In Annie's Project programs, trained facilitators provide safe harbor, connection, discovery, and shared experiences utilizing locally vetted instructors and presenters who deliver unbiased research-based information to small, dynamic groups of women in agriculture. Participants are empowered to be successful through education, networks, and resources. The educational topics cover one or all areas of agricultural risk management including marketing, production, financial, human resource, and legal. Educational delivery methods include in-person, virtual live sessions, virtual self-guided recorded sessions, with many courses using a hybrid approach. With the help of 800 plus facilitators, Annie's Project has reached over 19,000 women through coursework and thousands more through less formal virtual sessions. The national Annie's Project program evaluation includes a pre and post test to determine knowledge gain in risk management. The evaluation results show Annie's Project risk management courses are effective in achieving the goal of improving women's knowledge in all five areas of agricultural risk management.

Background

Annie's Project, a national nonprofit to educate and empower women in agriculture, is celebrating 20 years since its founding. Annie's Project uses a methodology that builds confidence, develops networks, and creates lifelong learners among women farmers, ranchers, and growers.

- Annie's Project programs are offered in person and virtually. The programs include:
- Annie's Project 101 covers the five areas of risk management – people, financial, production, marketing and legal.
 - Know Your Numbers Know Your Options addresses farm financial literacy, including financial statements and benchmarking.
 - Managing for Today and Tomorrow covers business and succession planning.
 - Inspired by Annie's courses are a wide range of offerings determined by participant needs. Topics have included: marketing; a variety of courses specific to particular enterprises (urban ag, poultry, cattle, equine, greenhouses etc.); and practical hands-on courses (equipment operation, AI, drone operation and accounting software)
 - Leadership and other new offerings are being developed.
 - Courses are offered on the community, county, state, territory and national level.

- Additional programming that is offered nationally includes:
- Educational webinars and podcasts
 - Annie's Conversations
 - Annie's Coffee Shop
 - Cultivating Resiliency – Farm Stress Programming (we are one of several partners)
 - Leadership and other new offerings are being developed.
 - 20th Anniversary events including a 20th anniversary conference, webinars and podcasts



Results and Impact

The evaluation survey analysis shows increases in the mean scores of knowledge between the pre-course and post-course levels. These results illustrate the effectiveness of Annie's Project risk management programs in improving women's knowledge in the five areas of risk management: production, legal, marketing, human resource, and financial.

