

# Small Farms, Education and Outreach

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## History

New and small farms have been a hot topic in Ohio for several years. The Ohio State Small Farm Team started offering colleges in 2005 and conferences in 2009. Since then, there have been approximately 34 colleges and 13 conferences in Ohio Counties reaching over 2,100 people.

## Changes Occurring with Small Farm Needs

Small Farm programs began at The Ohio State University in 2005. The intention of the program was to offer a curriculum that taught skills and resources to individuals interested in owning and operating a small farm or farm business. An eight-week course was developed with a conference to follow, providing enterprise specific topics for producers.

Small farms, homesteaders and back yard gardeners are constantly seeking information about raising livestock, growing food, or starting a home business. The Ohio State Small Farm Team sees this need across the state in every county. The goal of the Small Farm Team is to offer small farm colleges, conferences and field days to help meet the needs of these audiences throughout the state. Within the last three years the Small Farm Team has made several changes to the curriculum that was originally offered.

## Small Farm Colleges

Colleges have been held around the state and offer a series of farm business planning and managing sessions to help participants develop their own small farm business plans. Class sizes range from 12-50 people.



## Small Farm Field Days

Field days are held at The Ohio State University research stations and campuses. One example is the Small Farm Ruminant field day which covers beef, sheep and goats. At the field day folks learn about nutrition, forages, housing, ventilation, manure management, and livestock marketing. Attendees also get to participate in hands on activities with beef and sheep.



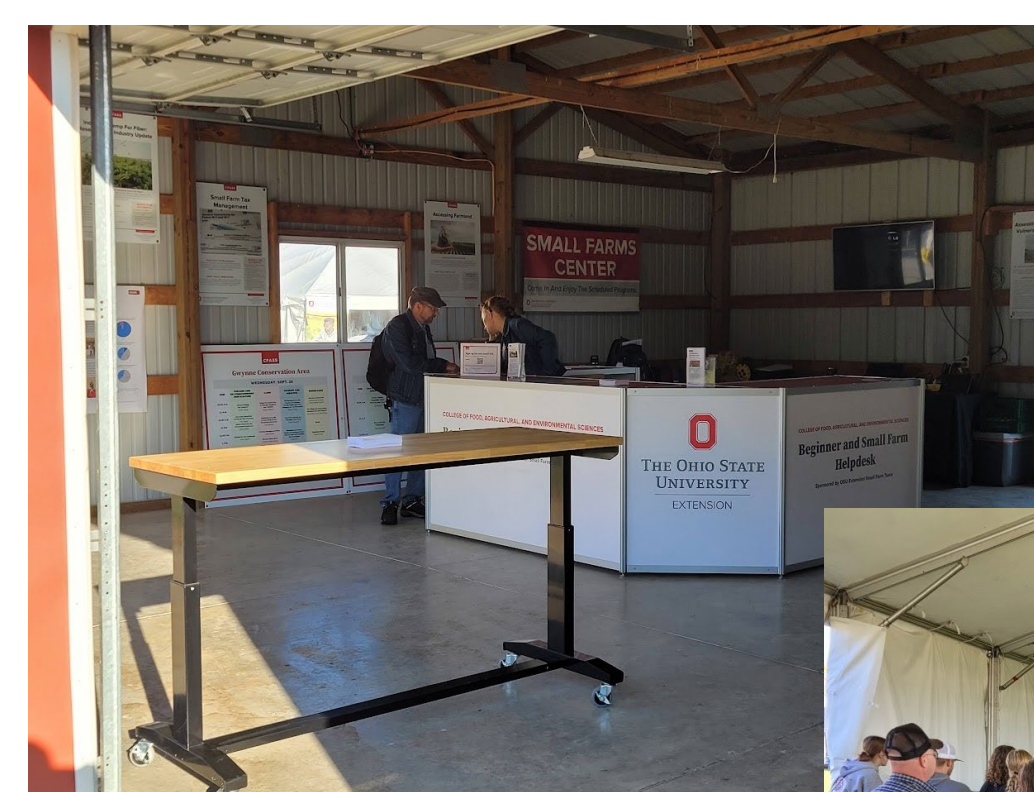
Participants got to use the calving simulator to see what a breech calf and several other calving scenarios feel like.



Participants also learned about how to Body Condition Score cattle.

## Small Farm at the Farm Science Review

Ohio State Farm Science Review is one of the largest events in the United States. Throughout the show the Small Farm Team and the Sustainable Agriculture Team offers short educational talks about small farming. Event goers also can visit with extension professionals to get questions answered and look at upcoming programming opportunities in our Small Farm Building.



The help desk encourages conversations with experts.

In 2023, 449 review attendees stopped to listen to 30 topics on farm enterprises.



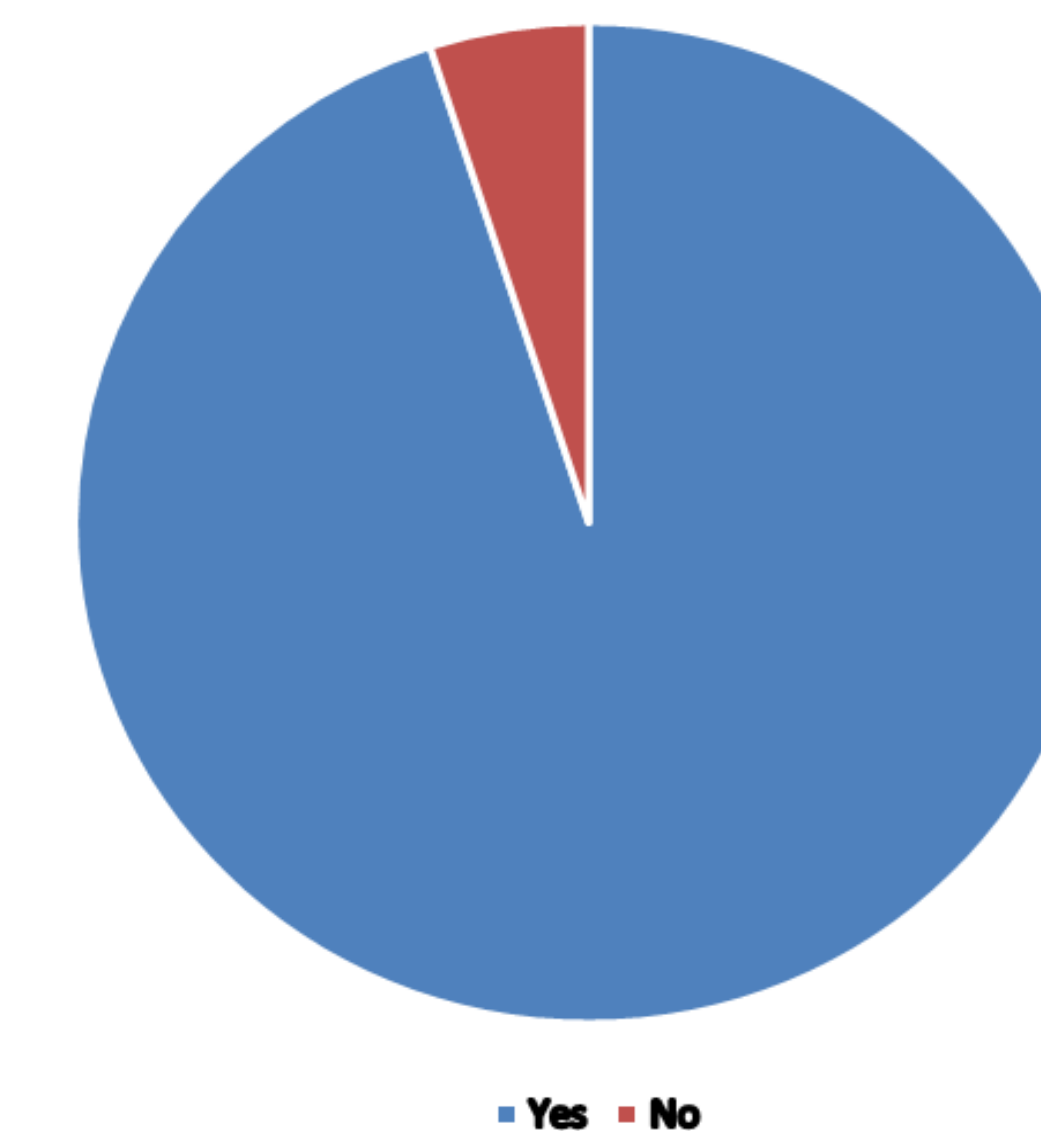
## Small Farm Conferences

Conferences are held around the state to offer a wide variety of farm enterprise classes. Over 100 individuals attend annually. These classes give participants an opportunity to learn more about specific subject matter such as growing commercial produce, small ruminant production, how to sell meat from the farm, marketing your small farm business and many more.

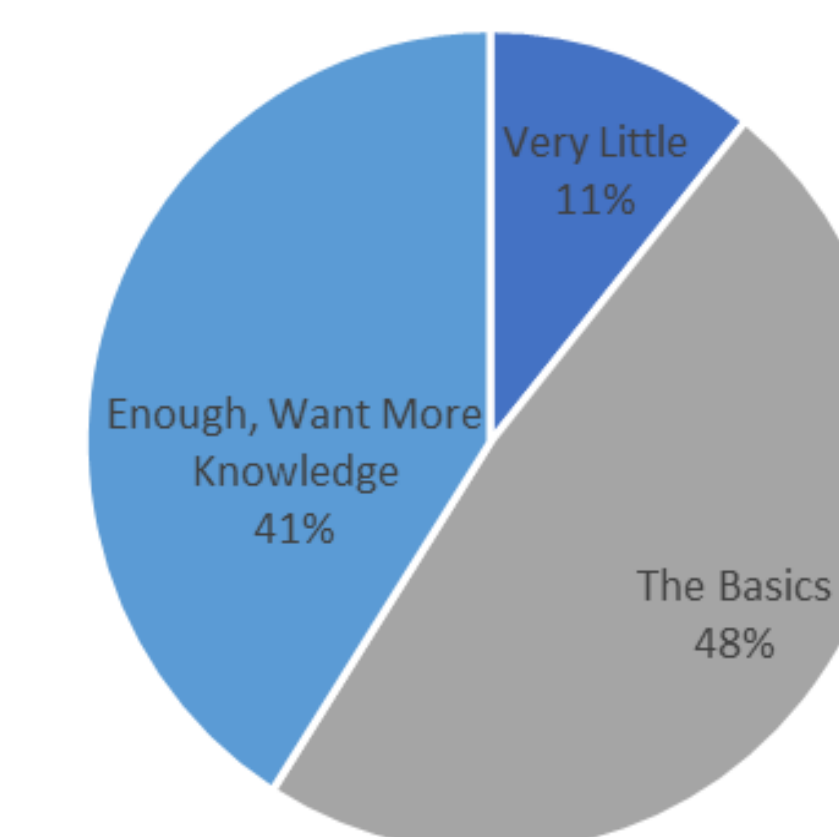


## Results

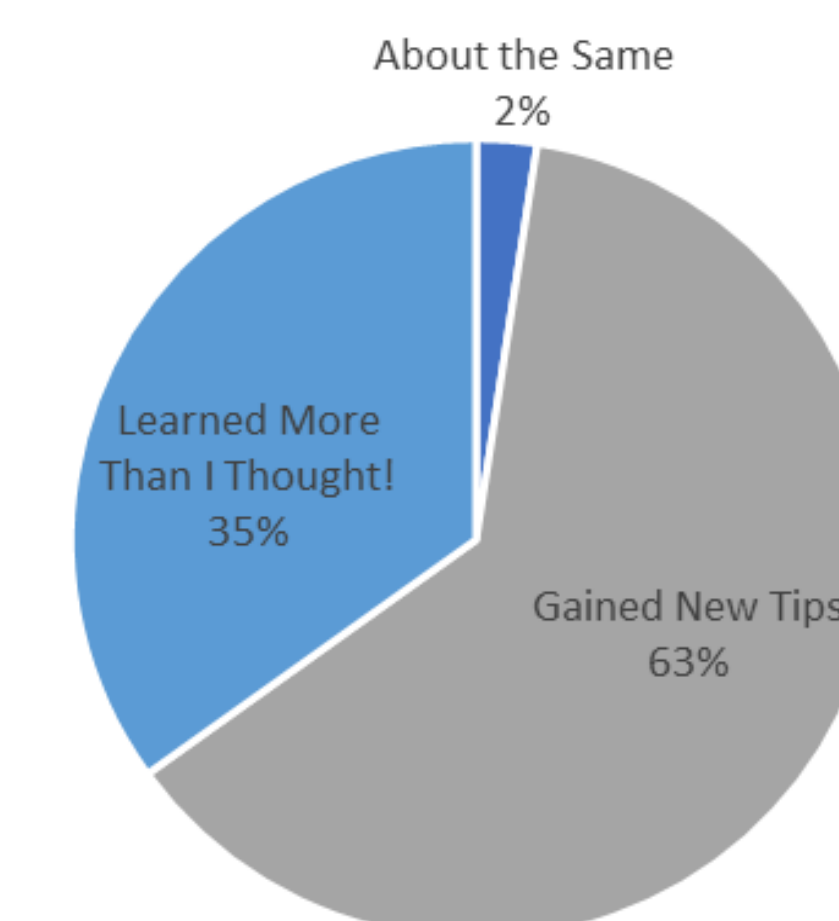
Do you believe your ability to manage your farm has increased as a result of attending the Small Farm College Workshop?



Degree of Knowledge of Participants **Before** the 2023 Small Farm Conference



Degree of Knowledge of Participants **After** the 2023 Small Farm Conference



Acknowledgements: Brad Bergefurd – photo credit, Tony Nye, Retired Small Farm Chair - history credit, Greg Meyer – photo credit, Kate Hornyak – photo credit.