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Brown County UW-Extension

Hmong Farmer Liaison Project

Situation-

A USDA Food Security Grant was awarded to Brown County UW-Extension WNEP in part to aid in the establishment of a Hmong community kitchen. As this group of UW-Extension staff began working with the Hmong community, they recognized the need for agricultural education and thus I was contacted.

To begin the process, I identified Hmong landowners and renters who were participating in animal husbandry projects or were interested in beginning to raise animals for sale. This was followed by farm visits. After these contacts, I felt there was evidence for a new audience. It would also be beneficial to find a trusted Hmong liaison to assist in the delivery of the educational information and assessment.

Response-

I wrote a proposal for funding in cooperation with the Brown County UW-Extension WNEP staff. Funding was awarded through the Eastern District Innovative Grant Program. We then enlisted the efforts of Blong Vang in the role of liaison. He appeared to be the wise choice due to his previous involvement with the WNEP staff and his established relationship within the Hmong Community.

Results-

This program allowed us to develop a comprehensive list of Hmong that are involved in production agriculture, vegetable production, and food/prep marketing. With this information in hand, I structured an educational session in an effort to address specific educational needs. Linkage was also developed with the UW-Green Bay Small Business Development Center and Brown County UW-Extension Community Gardens Program. I would have liked higher participatory levels at the group meetings; however, it did serve as a means to make some contacts and to start to understand the dynamics needed to work most effectively within the Hmong community.

Evidence-

Understanding the dynamics of how to best work within the Hmong community has been the most valuable information obtained throughout this project. Indications are that one-to-one involvement works best. Communications within the community are channeled very efficiently via person-to-person. I have had the opportunity to visit with several Hmong individuals. Currently, I am working with UW-Green Bay Small Business and the Biological Science and Engineering Department at University of Wisconsin in an effort to develop business and facility plans for a father and son that desire to raise, process, and market beef and swine.