Extension Education

Cultivating Farmers, Connections, and Careers: The Utah Urban and Small Farms Conference Experience

Katie Wagner[a], Kynda Curtis[a], Ruby Ward[a], Melanie Stock[a], and Sheriden Hansen[a]
[a]*Utah State University*

JEL Codes: Q12, Q13, Q14, Q15, Q16
Keywords: Career development, conference, Extension programming, impacts, producers, urban and small farms

Abstract
The Utah Urban and Small Farms Conference (USFC) provides outreach to new and existing small and urban agricultural producers facing urbanization and environmental challenges. The annual event attracts agricultural producers, home gardeners, stakeholders, and representatives and organizations in Utah and across the United States. Themed sessions given by producers, government personnel, and Extension faculty result in information adoption and implementation, community partnerships, and Extension educational outreach, influencing professional careers and urban agriculture governance. The USFC model may assist organizations and communities facing similar challenges, helping urban and small farmers navigate obstacles and opportunities through education and information sharing.

1 Introduction

Every state has unique agricultural operations and production challenges, and Utah is no exception. According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), National Agriculture Statistics Service (2020), Utah's primary agricultural products include livestock and animal products, agronomic crops, as well as tree fruit and nuts, and fresh produce. Utah's topography varies across the state and accounts for differences in growing season length, as well as water and land availability. Frost-sensitive crops, such as fruits and warm-season vegetables, are grown on valley benches (narrow strips of land bounded by steep slopes), whereas hardier crops, such as grains and hay, are grown on valley floors where cold air settles and causes large temperature variations (Ruffner 1985). Other environmental and topographical factors that influence production in Utah's semi-arid climate include soil quality, water quantity and quality, intense high-elevation solar radiation, extreme daily temperature fluctuations, and the large range in growing zones across relatively short distances. Further, most Utah farming operations are small with 34 percent using 10 acres or less, and another 29 percent using 10 to 49 acres. A comparison of Utah's new and beginning producers (10 years or less in operation) to all producers shows an even greater majority of beginning farmers operate small farms, with 41 percent farming less than 10 acres, and another 28 percent 10 to 49 acres (USDA, National Agriculture Statistics Service 2020).

Additionally, rapid population growth has resulted in residential development of mountain benches that were historically fruit orchards and fresh produce farms. According to the 2020 U.S. Census, Utah was the fastest-growing state from 2010 to 2020 (Davidson 2019). Most urban development has occurred along Utah's I-15 corridor, also referred to as the Wasatch Front.[1] For example, Davis County (Utah's second-most densely populated county, located just north of Salt Lake County) houses some of Utah's most fertile agricultural land. However, rapid urbanization has increased demand for housing. The Utah Foundation (2014) estimates a 52 percent population increase in Davis County from 2010 to 2050, and Davis County reported a 7.5 percent increase in housing units from 2017

[1] The Wasatch Front includes Weber, Davis, Salt Lake, and Utah counties.

to 2023 (U.S. Census Bureau 2023). Housing development has led to farmland loss and an increase in small acreage urban farming. The 2017 USDA Census of Agriculture reported farms with fewer than 9 acres account for 49 percent (approx. 25,000 acres) of the farm ground in the county (52,000 acres), reflecting the high value of land and competition between residential and agricultural land use. Of the 405,760 acres in the county, 53 percent is water, and the remaining 47 percent consists of farmland, residential, commercial, and roadway space.

Salt Lake County (Utah's most densely populated county) housed just under 1.2 million residents in 2020, or 36 percent of Utah's total population (U.S. Census Bureau 2021). Despite its sizeable population, Salt Lake County's available land is restricted. Farmable and developable ground is landlocked between two major mountain ranges: the Wasatch Mountains to the east and the Oquirrh Mountains to the west. The county is about 742 square miles or 475,000 acres; therefore, farmable land acquisition is a significant concern for producers due to high land costs and population density (≈ 1,600 people/square mile). The USDA Agricultural Census (USDA, National Agriculture Statistics Service 2017a) reported that Salt Lake County had 592 farms with a median size of 6 acres. Most farms (66 percent) were less than 10 acres, and 62 percent had less than $2,500 in annual sales. Therefore, most producers in Salt Lake County are very small and have limited operations in urban areas.

Despite these challenges, the Wasatch Front is home to a thriving urban agriculture community. For example, in 2021, Salt Lake County housed at least 14 farmers markets (an increase from six in 2009), dozens of community gardens and community supported agriculture (CSA) programs, and numerous local restaurants and markets that feature regionally supported agriculture (RSA) foods (Utah Farmers Market Network 2022). Furthermore, Salt Lake has an abundance of direct market consumers who value locally grown agricultural commodities, which may partly explain why many new, innovative, and largely young farmers opened new urban agriculture businesses in recent years.

The trends previously discussed highlight the need for and importance of the Utah Urban and Small Farms Conference (USFC), developed to train new and existing small[2] and urban agricultural producers on innovative conservation practices, emerging technologies, and opportunities for enhanced profitability. Furthermore, an annual event where agriculture producers and Extension professionals could gather to learn, ask questions, and network was essential to understanding the needs of Utah's small and urban farmers. While the USFC targets small and urban farmers in Utah, it has become an important event regionally, if not nationally. Organizers of similar small farm conferences in other states attend the USFC annually to gain information on how the USFC is organized and operated, as well as to take back relevant information for small famers in their states. Additionally, conference speakers are drawn nationally, often coming from states with similar growing conditions and/or challenges. For example, an apple producer from the eastern United States spoke about frost protection practices that are now being implemented in Utah due to climate change. Finally, since the USFC moved to a virtual format in 2021 (due to COVID-19), conference attendance has expanded to other states (25 in 2014 and 35 in 2023, for example). Hence, while presentations on products/markets and grower experiences tend to focus on the needs of Utah growers, the conference's national audience likely leads to information use and adoption nationwide.

This paper discusses the USFC and its successes, highlighting its role in supporting small and urban farmers. It addresses Utah's unique agricultural challenges, such as variable topography and climate, and the impact of rapid urbanization on farmland. The USFC provides targeted Extension programming, including technical production, business guidance, and market information. By fostering community partnerships, supporting diverse agricultural practices, and responding to emerging issues, the USFC aids local producers in enhancing profitability and sustainability. Importantly, the conference has boosted the careers of new Extension faculty, at the state and county levels, and these impacts are

[2] More than 90 percent of farms in the United States are classified as small, with a gross cash farm income of $250,000, or less (USDA, https://www.nifa.usda.gov/topics/small-family-farms).

also described. This conference serves as a blueprint for other areas (states, regions, etc.) looking to support small and urban farmers facing challenges such as climate change, urbanization, etc.

2 USFC Program Background

Utah State University (USU) Extension faculty held the annual Diversified Agriculture Consortium (DAC) conference from 2003 to 2012. The conference location changed annually to offer production and economic information relevant to agriculture producers in different communities across Utah. Although primarily hosted in rural agricultural counties, in 2012 the DAC was held in densely populated Davis County, where the project team recognized the need to provide information relevant for urban agriculture production. Newly hired horticulture faculty in Salt Lake County expressed interest in urban farming outreach and provided a connection to urban small acreage producers who typically had not participated in the DAC. Organizers developed a well-attended urban farming track in 2012 that attracted small acreage producers from the Wasatch Front region. Due to high attendance at the urban farming track and organizers acknowledging the need to provide targeted outreach to this audience, the conference permanently moved to Salt Lake County in 2013, and its name was changed to the Utah USFC.

Annually held in February, the USFC is an in-person two-day conference (virtual recorded three- or four-day from 2021 to 2024) attended and supported by USU Extension specialists and county faculty from across the state. The conference targets novice to experienced producers seeking technical production information, business and marketing guidance, and improved knowledge of local/urban agriculture issues. Each year, the conference holds themed track sessions that respond to the needs of constituents. For example, tracks have included: vegetable production, berry production, micro farming, cut flower production, and animal operations. Annual topics are selected by the conference planning committee using feedback from previous conference evaluations, with special consideration of emerging topics of urgent need (i.e., Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) rule changes and severe drought conditions in the Western United States). New information is shared each year, but the continuity of similar track names from year to year helps attendees better identify the topics, which will be shared during track sessions. Also, annual track sessions focusing on marketing, finance, and federal grant and loan programs have been held, emphasizing their importance for farm profitability (Marshall 2012). The in-person conferences required registration and payment of a small fee to cover food expenses as most of the conference costs were covered by outside grants. The virtual conferences required registration but no fees. The conference is open to all, and there are no prerequisites.

One key to the success of the USFC is using a combination of academic speakers, government personnel, and producers. The inclusion of presentations by producers, along with faculty-led science-based research, has likely led to higher attendee information adoption rates as shown below. The USFC planning committee consists of approximately 20 members to gather a wide range of program content, while a smaller core committee handles registration, logistics, etc. Additionally, the core committee gives faculty ownership of track content, which enables session track organizers to focus on the programming, while core committee members streamline planning details such as evaluation and conference delivery (i.e., catering, facility rental, marketing, registration, webinar set-up, etc.).

By 2017, the conference was attracting advanced and beginning farmers as well as home gardeners. In response to attendees' wide range of needs, beginning and advanced sessions were held concurrently to provide both groups information and maintain discussion at an appropriate technical level. For example, a presentation to onion producers on advanced pest control would not be interrupted by a home gardener wanting to know which onion varieties grow best in Utah. The agenda was color-coded to help participants easily identify "beginner" and "advanced" level sessions. As specific "beginner" sessions had higher attendance each year, more advanced sessions were organized for the following year. For example, an introductory high tunnel production session offered in 2017 was

followed by an advanced high tunnel production session in 2018, thus facilitating year-to-year growth in skill levels among attendees. Participant suggestions for future conference topics became another important tool used by the planning committee to maintain and expand participant interest from year to year. Alternative farming topics, such as animal operations, were provided due to a vibrant homesteading audience located along the Wasatch Front. Utah urban homesteaders farm small acreages with diverse outputs, such as vegetables, fruits, livestock, and flowers. Other states have reported similar interest among small acreage producers for Extension educational outreach focused on producing diverse and specialty crops (Andries, Simon, and Rivers 2016; Mariola, Moledina, and Nye 2020).

3 Creating Partnerships and Building Careers

3.1 Supporting Micro-Scale Farmers

The conference has become an asset for new and seasoned faculty to provide Extension outreach in their field of expertise, connect with statewide clientele, and assess needs. For example, a new Extension faculty member in Davis County organized a micro farming preconference track in 2018 targeting micro-scale (<2 acre) growers. More than 80 small-scale growers (45 percent of conference attendees) attended the track, and they all participated in a needs assessment to help the faculty member better understand their challenges and greatest needs. The track has been incorporated into the main body of the conference since 2019, with topics presented based on continued needs assessment. Topics have included irrigation, fertility and soil management, marketing, finance, selling at various outlets such as farmers markets and CSAs, organic and permaculture methods, hydroponics, and aquaponics. Since 2018, 487 individuals have attended the micro farming track, and, overall, 91 percent of attendees say they will implement the information learned during sessions into their operation. Additionally, identifying needs for this group has helped the faculty member develop year-round programming and research that specifically targets this audience. In 2018, based on the feedback from this conference, this faculty member installed the Urban Farm Demonstration Garden at the USU Botanical Center in Davis County, which trials and showcases alternative growing techniques, such as vertical trellising[3] to improve yields in small spaces. Data collected from these gardens was presented at the USFC in 2020 and 2021 and was incorporated into a field day held in June 2022 for USFC attendees (see conference archives at https://extension.usu.edu/diverseag/urban-and-small-farms-conference/past-conferences).

3.2 Uniting Cut Flower Producers

Another example includes a new Extension small farms specialist who implemented a cut flower track in 2019. Cut flower farmers are one of the most recent and rapidly growing small acreage groups in Utah. Utah averages 30 to 40 new flower farms annually, growing from just over 20 in 2018 to 200 growers in 2023 (Langford, Curtis, and Stock 2023). These nontraditional farmers are often new to agriculture (i.e., have no prior farm experience); 77 percent identify as female, and 66 percent are ages 25 to 44, which is much younger than the average U.S. producer at 58 years of age (USDA, National Agriculture Statistics Service 2017b; Stock 2020). Cut flowers are also one of the highest value crops produced on limited land, with average net returns of $2.50 per sq. ft. (Lewis et al. 2021), as opposed to mixed vegetables at $0.17 per sq. ft. (Curtis, Olsen, and Wagner 2015). To reach this demographic, the cut flower track has been held at the USFC for the last four years and attracts approximately 25 percent of conference attendees. Notably, the Utah Cut Flower Farm Association, a certified nonprofit now with 200 members, launched after the growers and Extension specialist organized the cut flower track at the USFC in 2019. This specialist's primary research and Extension programming now focus on the cultivation and marketing of cut flowers. Her outreach efforts are highly

[3] Vertical farming is the practice of "farming up," in which a variety of structures are used to elevate plant growth to take advantage of vertical space. Vertical farming is well-suited to urban areas where space is limited, and growers are interested in using space most efficiently.

efficient, leveraging knowledge gained at the USFC that this farming group prefers Instagram (Menlo Park, CA) over all other social and digital media platforms (Davidson 2019). Her USU Small Farms Instagram account now has over 3,260 followers, incrementally building knowledge, providing timely alerts and recommendations, and promoting events to keep this new audience engaged with USU Extension.

3.3 Partnering to Aid Refugees

Additionally, the USFC facilitated a connection between refugee farmers and Extension faculty. Starting in 2015, a separate session was organized annually for refugee farmers participating in the International Rescue Committee's New Roots program that helps train refugee farmers. According to their website, "Since 2008, New Roots has helped new Americans to navigate their food resources, facilitated low-income families to enter urban agriculture, developed local food systems and community green space infrastructure, and provided a platform for youth and adults to build job and life skills" (International Rescue Committee 2021). Collaboration with the New Roots program through the USFC has yielded partnership efforts between New Roots and USU Extension on grant projects, educational outreach materials, and other collaborative efforts. For example, USU Extension partnered with New Roots on a USDA Beginning Farmer and Rancher Program (BFR) grant (2017–2021), which funded the following:

- Establishing a new refugee farm site in Salt Lake County on 15 acres.
- Expanding a current New Roots farm in Salt Lake County.
- Developing a refugee incubator farm site in Logan, Utah—where USU is located—in partnership with the Cache Refugee and Immigrant Connection (CRIC).

In 2020, the refugee session at the USFC also included farmers from the CRIC site. The partnership is ongoing as New Roots and CRIC farmers participated in the virtual USFCs from 2021 to 2024, and the BFR grant between the three partners was renewed for another three years starting in 2021, providing $1.2 million in funding across the seven years of the project.

4 Impacts on USFC Attendees

From 2013 to 2020, an average of 200 participants attended the annual in-person USFC, although attendance grew steadily each year starting at 146 in 2013. Interestingly, the COVID-19 pandemic forced the conference to virtual delivery beginning in 2021, and attendance skyrocketed to more than 700 attendees annually. Furthermore, attendees from several states and a handful of international countries tuned in for the 2021 to 2024 online conference sessions. When held in person, the USFC provided face-to-face networking opportunities and chances for Extension specialists and county faculty to discuss new ideas and projects and personally meet with growers. To mimic these face-to-face opportunities during and post pandemic, June field days were held in 2022 and 2023. The 2022 field day, hosted at the USU Greenville Research Farm in North Logan, UT, had 60 attendees. The 2023 field day was hosted at the USU Botanical Center in Kaysville, UT, with 105 attendees. In 2024, a field day was not held due to personnel changes, but there are plans to host them annually moving forward. Field day topics included but were not limited to cut flower harvesting, use of cover crops, small farm budgeting, and season extension techniques.

In 2017, an online evaluation survey was conducted with participants from the 2013–2016 conferences in addition to the session and conference evaluations conducted annually. Evaluation results showed that 60 percent of respondents had incorporated a significant amount (>3 on a 5-point scale) of the material presented at the conference into their operation, and 89 percent were likely to or would definitely attend a future USFC. Respondents were primarily small-scale growers selling through farmers markets, farm stands, and restaurants, and 54 percent had increased their farm sales since attending the conference. Additional financial and social impacts for participants are reported in Tables 1 and 2.

Table 1: Operational Impacts as a Result of Conference Attendance (2013–2016 Conferences, *N* = 51).

Change/Impact	Increase	No Change	Unsure	Decrease	Not Applicable
Range of products offered	16%	50%	17%	8%	9%
Range of product varieties grown	33%	41%	16%	0%	9%
Type or amount of irrigation used	42%	42%	8%	0%	9%
Number of employees	25%	33%	8%	0%	34%
Financing amounts/options	16%	33%	16%	0%	34%
Number of customers	50%	25%	8%	0%	17%
Overall operation profitability	25%	42%	16%	0%	17%

Note: Percentage of respondents selecting increase, no change, unsure, decrease, or not applicable for each item. Data collected in 2017.

Table 2: Longer Term Impacts of Conference Attendance (2013–2016 Conferences, *N* = 51).

Statement	Agree	Unsure	Disagree
My farming operation is now more economically viable.	34%	66%	0%
The quality of life on my farm has improved.	50%	50%	0%
My farming operation is now more efficient.	42%	58%	0%
My family's goals are now easier to achieve.	39%	61%	0%

Note: Percentage of respondents selecting agree, unsure, or disagree for each statement. Data collected in 2017.

Participants gave some of the following statements regarding impacts:

- "*Improved soil as a result of better cover crop management. Improved water use as a result of better understanding irrigation*."
- "*Networking and finding new opportunities*."
- "*Income from ag is not a large part of my income, but my operations have enhanced the value of my property and of my social connections*."

For the years 2021 to 2024, conference evaluations were conducted online due to the virtual conference format (see evaluation example in the Appendix). As shown in Table 3, participants planned to heavily use the knowledge and skills learned at the conference, to use the conference materials as a future resource, and to become more informed about the resources available to them. They were also better prepared to manage changes in their operation, to evaluate new ideas, and to manage risk. The majority of the participants (from 58 to 72 percent depending on the year) indicated they would incorporate most/a great deal of the information they obtained at the conference into their operation/job. When asked about how their attendance at the conference would improve their operation, participants gave the following statements:

- "*Just getting started. The conference gave me a lot of information to use as I consider how to successfully begin*."
- "*I plan to expand my home garden and increase my yield through better management of soils, water, and pest and disease management/prevention*."

Table 3: Conference Attendee Skill, Knowledge, and Attitude Changes (2021–2024 Conferences).

Statement	Mean 2021 (*N* = 249)	Mean 2022 (*N* = 121)	Mean 2023 (*N* = 141)	Mean 2024 (*N* = 116)
I will reevaluate aspects of my operation/program as a result of what I learned.	4.51	4.31	4.61	4.55
I am better prepared to evaluate new ideas and manage my risk.	4.56	4.34	4.57	4.51
I am more aware of the information/resources available (i.e., speakers, agencies, websites, etc.).	4.70	4.47	4.72	4.60
I will use the conference materials as a future resource.	4.70	4.54	4.77	4.56
I plan to use the knowledge/skills I learned.	4.80	4.62	4.85	4.70
I will share the skills learned/information gained at this conference with others.	4.59	4.45	4.56	4.43
I am better prepared to address changes in my operation/program.	4.51	4.29	4.57	4.41

Note: Responses were rated numerically 5 = strongly agree, 4 = somewhat agree, 3 = neither agree nor disagree, 2 = somewhat disagree, 1 = strongly disagree. Data collected annually.

- "*Problem solving and efficiency will improve, I have more informational resources," and "I am going to test my soil right away and get cover crop going*."
- "*I will put much more effort into soils and weed reduction and may scale down production and home in on a few things rather than trying to do all the things*."
- "*I learned several valuable ideas that are helpful*."
- "*I simply have more knowledge and will plan and plant differently than what I originally had in mind*."

Participants were also asked to indicate the value of their attendance or the benefit to their operation moving forward. As shown in Table 4, 20 and 24 percent of attendees selected the value exceeds $1,000 in 2022 and 2024, respectively. Across all years, 58 to 69 percent of attendees noted the value exceeded $100. The value of the conference in 2024 is further highlighted by the strong demand for the conference materials post conference. Specifically, 2,359 people viewed the recorded conference presentations online in the two months post conference. Since 65 to 75 percent (depending on year) of participants indicated in the annual evaluations that they prefer the virtual format, the conference will be held virtually going forward.

Table 4: Attendee Perceived Value of Conference Attendance (2021–2024 Conferences).

Amount	Percentage 2021 (*N* = 249)	Percentage 2022 (*N* = 121)	Percentage 2023 (*N* = 141)	Percentage 2024 (*N* = 116)
$100 or less	42.08%	36.25%	32.35%	31.25%
$101 to $500	39.34%	31.25%	39.22%	26.25%
$501 to $1,000	10.38%	12.50%	17.65%	18.75%
More than $1,000	8.20%	20.00%	10.78%	23.75%

Note: Percentage of respondents selecting each dollar amount category. Data collected annually.

5 Impacts on Local Policy/Governance

In addition to impacting individual farmers, the USFC also had a direct effect on local governance. Due to work with micro-scale farmers at the USFC, USU Extension faculty were able to assist with Utah State House Bill (HB) 390 (Urban Farming Assessment Act amendments) in 2021. Representative Mike Kohler (Wasatch County) requested expected yield data for small-scale operations that could be used on a sliding scale throughout Utah to apply HB 390. USU Extension specialists and county faculty combined field research, demonstration garden, and on-farm data to quantify minimum, average, and maximum yield estimates to apply across the state. This information was also presented to county assessors at the Utah Association of Counties Annual Management Conference. This act has been adopted by counties across Utah and allows for agricultural use assessments for small-scale farms (<5 acres). Agricultural tax assessment increases the potential for small farm profitability as well as helps to maintain agricultural space in urban areas across Utah (see https://law.justia.com/codes/utah/title-59/chapter-2/part-17/section-1703/ for more information).

6 Conclusions

The USFC was adapted to meet the needs of beginning and advanced urban and small farmers in Utah. The conference has also become a cornerstone event, connecting farmers, stakeholders, representatives, and organizations. Increasing urban population densities and the ongoing loss of prime Utah farmland, combined with emerging challenges such as severe drought, will continue to threaten the profitability of agriculture. By connecting urban and small farm producers with Extension specialists and governmental agencies and resources, the USFC has become an important resource for local producers navigating these challenges and diversifying their operations. The localized information sharing model of the USFC helps Utah's urban and small farmers mitigate Utah's environmental challenges and explore emerging technologies and opportunities for enhanced profitability.

The USFC has spurred community partnerships and supported the careers of Extension professionals through constituent needs assessments, program recognition, and educational outreach opportunities. These connections help strengthen the broader local food network and enable USU Extension faculty to fulfill their roles to respond to emerging needs and issues affecting agriculture in Utah.

Finally, conference evaluations indicate the USFC successfully attracted the urban and small farming audience, conference attendees implemented information they learned at the conference, and many attend the USFC annually. By incorporating feedback from attendees and the large planning committee, conference organizers will continue to structure future conferences to meet the needs and interests of attendees, as well as provide guidance to the challenges and opportunities facing Utah's urban and small farmers. The USFC model may well benefit other states and communities that have similar challenges facing agriculture by serving as an approach to help small and urban farmers navigate obstacles and opportunities via educational opportunities and information sharing.

About the Authors: Katie Wagner is an Extension Professor with Utah State University Extension. Kynda Curtis is a Professor and Extension Specialist at Utah State University (Corresponding Author Email: kynda.curtis@usu.edu). Ruby Ward is a Professor and Extension Specialist at Utah State University. Melanie Stock is an Associate Professor and Extension Specialist at Utah State University. Sheriden Hansen is an Extension Associate Professor with Utah State University Extension.

Acknowledgements: This research was supported by the Utah Agricultural Experiment Station, Utah State University, and approved as journal paper number #9577. The USU IRB determined that the evaluations mentioned do not qualify as human subjects research (Protocol #: 14353).

Appendix: Utah Urban and Small Farms Conference Evaluation Survey Example

Thank you for attending the Utah Urban and Small Farms Conference and for taking the time to complete the conference evaluation. Your valued comments will help us improve the conference in future years. Thank you!

Which conference sessions did you attend? (Choose all that apply)

- ☐ Cut Flowers (Tuesday morning)
- ☐ Animals (Tuesday afternoon)
- ☐ Resilience in Agriculture (Wednesday morning)
- ☐ Fruit (Wednesday afternoon)
- ☐ Grants, Business Assistance, and Other Resources (Thursday all day)

Please rate your satisfaction with the following conference amenities.

	Extremely satisfied	Somewhat satisfied	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	Somewhat dissatisfied	Extremely dissatisfied
Topics presented/covered	○	○	○	○	○
Speaker quality	○	○	○	○	○
Time allowed per session	○	○	○	○	○
Dates/time of year	○	○	○	○	○
Registration process	○	○	○	○	○
Zoom interface	○	○	○	○	○
Online schedule and information	○	○	○	○	○
Q&A sessions	○	○	○	○	○
Networking sessions	○	○	○	○	○
Other	○	○	○	○	○

How likely are you to use the following?

	Extremely likely	Somewhat likely	Neither likely nor unlikely	Somewhat unlikely	Extremely unlikely
Presentation materials and handouts online	○	○	○	○	○
Recorded presentations for later viewing online	○	○	○	○	○
Materials and handouts emailed or sent to you	○	○	○	○	○
Other	○	○	○	○	○

Please rate your experience at the conference by indicating your agreement with each of the following statements.

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree
I will reevaluate aspects of my operation/program as a result of what I learned.	○	○	○	○	○
I am better prepared to evaluate new ideas and manage my risk.	○	○	○	○	○
I am more aware of the information/ resources available (i.e., speakers, agencies, websites, etc.).	○	○	○	○	○
I will use the conference materials as a future resource.	○	○	○	○	○
I plan to use the knowledge/skills I learned.	○	○	○	○	○

Question continued.

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree
I will share the skills learned/information gained at this conference with others.	○	○	○	○	○
I was able to ask questions and offer my insights.	○	○	○	○	○
I was able to understand most of what I heard and saw.	○	○	○	○	○
I am better prepared to address changes in my operation/ program as a result of attending this conference.	○	○	○	○	○

How much of the material presented at the conference do you plan to incorporate into your operation/job?

○ None

○ Not much

○ Some

○ Quite a bit

○ A great deal

How did you learn about this conference? (Choose all that apply)

☐ Newspaper/magazine

☐ Flyer/brochure

☐ Blog

- [ ] Internet/social media
- [ ] Email
- [ ] Radio
- [ ] Extension agent
- [ ] Friend/associate
- [ ] Other: _____

How likely are you to attend a future Urban and Small Farms Conference?

- ○ Will not attend
- ○ Not likely to attend
- ○ Unsure
- ○ Likely to attend
- ○ Definitely will attend

What is the value of your attendance at this conference or the benefits to your operation/program that will result due to changes you will implement?

- ○ $100 or less
- ○ $101–$500
- ○ $501–$1,000
- ○ More than $1,000

While the conference was held virtually this year, the conference has been held in-person in the Salt Lake area in the past. Please indicate which of the following would be significant obstacles to your attendance at an in-person conference. (Choose all that apply)

- [ ] Conference dates/timing

- [ ] Time to attend/obtaining time off to attend
- [ ] Travel costs
- [ ] Distance from the conference venue
- [ ] Registration costs
- [ ] Business/work obligations
- [ ] Childcare or similar
- [ ] Family obligations
- [ ] Other _____

Which of the following were obstacles to your participation in the virtual conference this year? (Choose all that apply)

- [ ] Conference dates/timing
- [ ] Conference length
- [ ] Internet bandwidth/connectivity
- [ ] Access to a computer or device
- [ ] Software quality, zoom issues
- [ ] Business/work obligations
- [ ] Childcare
- [ ] Family obligations
- [ ] Other _____

Generally, which of the following conference formats would you prefer? (Choose only one)

- ○ In-person
- ○ Virtual – Webinar
- ○ Hybrid (both in-person and online)
- ○ Other _____

Which virtual conference length would you prefer? (Choose only one)

- ○ 1–2 days
- ○ 3–4 days
- ○ Several half-days in the same week
- ○ Several half days across a month
- ○ Other _____

What types of educational opportunities would be most helpful to you? (Choose all that apply)

- ☐ In-person class workshops
- ☐ In-person field days
- ☐ Webinars
- ☐ Online courses
- ☐ Podcasts
- ☐ Broadcast class/workshop
- ☐ Online materials
- ☐ One-on-one assistance/training
- ☐ Other _____

Describe how your operation/program may change as a result of your attendance at this conference?
_____

_____
_____
_____
_____

What did you like most about the conference?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

What should be changed or what didn't work well at the conference?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Which topics did you find the most helpful/useful?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

What new topics should be included in future conferences?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Select the category that best applies to you. (Choose only one)

- ○ Farmer/rancher
- ○ Business owner
- ○ Extension associate
- ○ Student – university
- ○ Student – secondary
- ○ Agency representative

- ○ Nonprofit representative
- ○ Community representative
- ○ Educator
- ○ Service provider
- ○ Other: _____

If you are involved in agriculture or food production, select the category that best applies to your operation. (Choose only one)

- ○ Flower crops
- ○ Nursery/ornamentals
- ○ Livestock/animals
- ○ Vegetable crops
- ○ Fruits or nuts
- ○ Milk, dairy, cheese
- ○ Poultry or eggs
- ○ Value-added
- ○ Food processing
- ○ Agritourism
- ○ Supply business
- ○ Other: _____

References

Andries, K., M. Simon, and L. Rivers. 2016. "Third Thursday Thing: A Success Story for Reaching Underserved Clients." *Journal of Extension* 54(4): Article 4IAW1.

Curtis, K., S. Olsen, and K. Wagner. 2015. "Utah Urban Small-Scale Mixed Vegetable Production Costs and Returns—5 Acres, 2015." Utah State University Extension. https://digitalcommons.usu.edu/extension_curall/763.

Davidson, L. 2019. "Utah Was the Fastest Growing State in the Last Decade, According to Census Preview." *Salt Lake Tribune*, December 30.

International Rescue Committee. 2021. "IRC's New Roots Program: Growing Good from the Ground Up." https://www.rescue.org/resource/ircs-new-roots-program-growing-good-ground.

Langford, M., K. Curtis, and M. Stock. 2023. "An Overview of the Cut Flower Industry." USU Extension Fact, Applied Economics 2023-05pr. https://extension.usu.edu/apec/research/cut-flower-industry.

Lewis, M., M. Stock, R. Ward, B. Black, and D. Drost. 2021. "Peony Cut Flower Production Budget, One Field, Northern Utah, 2020." Utah State University Extension. https://digitalcommons.usu.edu/extension_curall/2166.

Mariola, M., A. Moledina, and L. Nye. 2020. "Are Beginning and Small Farmers Drawn to Diversification? Ten Years' Findings from Ohio." *Journal of Extension* 58(5):Article 5a6.

Marshall, R. 2012. "The Impact of the Extension Service on Minority-Owned Small Farm Operations." *Journal of Extension* 50(1): Article 1COM1.

Ruffner, J.A. 1985. *Climates of the States: National Atmospheric and Oceanic Administration Narrative Summaries, Tables, and Maps for Each State, with Overview of State Climatologist Programs*, 3rd ed., Vol. 2. Gale Research.

Stock, M. 2020. "High Impact Extension Programming with Instagram." *HortTechnology* 30(6):654–658.

U.S. Census of Agriculture. 2017. "Country Profile, Davis County, Utah." https://www.nass.usda.gov/Publications/AgCensus/2017/Online_Resources/County_Profiles/Utah/cp49011.pdf.

U.S. Census Bureau. 2021. "Quick Facts: Salt Lake County, Utah." https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/saltlakecountyutah.

U.S. Census Bureau. 2023. "Profile, Davis County, Utah." https://data.census.gov/profile/Davis_...?g=050XX00US49011.

U.S. Department of Agriculture, National Agriculture Statistics Service. 2017a. "County Profile, Davis County, Utah." Census of Agriculture.

U.S. Department of Agriculture, National Agriculture Statistics Service. 2017b. "Farm Producers. 2017 Census of Agriculture Highlights." https://www.nass.usda.gov/Publications/Highlights/2019/2017Census_Farm_Producers.pdf.

U.S. Department of Agriculture, National Agriculture Statistics Service. 2020. "Utah Annual Bulletin."

Utah Farmers Market Network. 2022. Utah State University Extension. https://www.utahfarmersmarketnetwork.org/.

Utah Foundation. 2014. A Snapshot of 2050: An Analysis of Projected Population Change in Utah (Research Report No. 720). https://www.utahfoundation.org/uploads/rr720.pdf.