

## **Development of an online training course on sustainable livestock production (poultry, sheep and goat), agroforestry and integrated operations for beginning farmers**

I. Reyes Herrera\*, D.J. Donoghue, P. Goeringer and H.L. Goodwin, University of Arkansas, Fayetteville, AR; A.C. Fanatico, Appalachian State University Boone, NC; A.M. Donoghue, J. Moyle, J. Burke, D. Burner, R. Raper, USDA, ARS Fayetteville and Booneville, AR; and T. Spencer and M. Hale, NCAT, Fayetteville, AR. \*University of Arkansas POSC O-304 479-575-6299, reyes@uark.edu

In the last few decades, there has been a marked reduction in the number of family and small agricultural enterprises in this country. Unfortunately, high startup costs, high costs of inputs and the lack of training tend to reduce the appeal of farming as a career. To help address this situation, we have developed a modular eLearning training program for beginning farmers and ranchers interested in poultry, sheep and goats, agroforestry and integrated farming operations. These topics were selected because they offer multiple low startup costs, high profit margins and multiple marketing opportunities. Modules included in the program focus on topics such as: Whole farm planning, Small meat and/or egg poultry operations, Meat and fiber sheep production, Goat production (dairy, meat and fiber), Agroforestry, Pasture and grazing management, Farm ecological management practices, Farm safety, Sustainable and organic livestock production, Integrated farm operations, and Marketing. These modules have been developed as part of an asynchronous online training program. This program has been designed so that each beginning farmer can select the specific learning modules that apply to his/hers needs, and thus provide a customized learning experience for them. All these modules will be available free of charge through the website of the National Center for Appropriate Technology (NCAT-ATTRA) as well as incorporated into training sessions and workshops coordinated by all the participating institutions. This program is funded in part by the USDA-NIFA-BFRDP 2010-03143.