

## Kerr Center Beginning Farmers and Ranchers Training, November 12, 2011

Six beginning farmers and ranchers got up very early on Saturday, some as early as 4 a.m., to make the trip to Poteau Kerr Center for the first of a year-long training sessions. Two training/mentoring programs were offered: horticulture and livestock. The six are on the horticulture tract. The training is all about building a sustainable agriculture business. The farmers and ranchers who are already in the business know about building the business utilizing a business plan, setting goals, record-keeping, finding out what are your resources whether it is people, equipment, livestock, seeds, etc. Mike Everett, Oklahoma Farmers and Ranchers Association, tired from being up most of the night at his daughter's birthday party and traveling from Dallas to Poteau, gave a session on goal setting asking pertinent questions: Where do you want to go? And How do you get there? Mike asked the audience to think about what do you want your world to be in the future? We each have our own \*goals (dreams) as we are beginners but I had to stop and think about land. What am I going to use if I do not have the land to farm or raise livestock? Native Americans probably have land but it is not being farmed. If my land is in another part of the state, what other resources can I use where I am? Mike gave insight into the future regarding resources, including the money that will be needed to begin our operation. As an outreach to help farmers and ranchers, MFSI has developed and been distributing a resource guide that lists sources of available funding. The resource guide is available from MFSI. Resources are available for youth as well. To see your vision come to life, Mike said to write it out. We also learned how to piece together a marketing plan. This answered questions such as what do I want to do with my produce that I grow or what do I do with the chickens/cows/goats, etc. that is now on my land? What are the realistic marketing \*strategies? Lastly, financial planning was discussed - net worth, profitability, cash flow, and advice on how to write out your plan. Records must be maintained to document day-to-day decision making, future planning, and tax management. It is in the best interest to have good records. According to the documentation we received, "to be successful in today's business environment, a farmer must also be a good financial planner." Homework was given to provide a business plan by December 10 to identify: A brief history of our farm operation, creating my business mission statement, identifying our family business goals, and prioritizing goal. The next training session for horticulture is Saturday, March 10, 2012.

Those who are on the livestock tract will be attending training Saturday, February 11, 2012. All sessions will be in Poteau at the Kerr Center or the Kiamichi Tech Center from 8:30 am until 4 pm. Contact J. Marshall, MFSI, at 918-752-6139.

\*A goal is a statement of what an individual or family want to achieve. A strategy is the means accomplishing the identified goals.