Arkansas Master Farmer

- Over the past three decades, society has applied increasing pressure on all sectors of society to protect the quality of water in our lakes and streams.
- Agriculture, a largely unregulated industry in terms of water quality, has come under increased scrutiny with attention turning from point to non-point source pollution (NPS).
- This has led to increased state and federal environmental legislation especially for confined animal agriculture.
- The swiftness of this legislation has caught many agricultural producers off guard and confused on how to deal with these issues.
- This is especially true in environmentally unregulated sectors of agriculture.
Arkansas Master Farmer
Who Wants It?

- Producer Groups
- Advocacy Groups such as the Arkansas Association Conservation Districts (AACD)
- Individual Producers
Arkansas Master Farmer
What Will It Provide

• Environmental Legislation Information
• State Water Quality Issues Information
• Best Management Practices (BMPS) to Mitigate NPS Pollution
• Incentive Programs for Installing BMPs.
Master Farmer and Extension/Advantages

- Provides a marketing tool for our environmental education programs
- Provides recognition as the organization of choice to help Agriculture address environmental issues through education
- Equips our Agents to better deliver education on environmental issues
- Allows us to be proactive rather than reactive
- Provide a unified, coordinated message from the Division of Agriculture on environmental issues.
Master Farmer and Extension/Challenges

- Environmental issues are dynamic, vary within and between watersheds, and solutions may specific to management units such as individual fields or farms.
- Effective implementation will require dedication and delivery at all levels in Extension.
- Environmental education will have to incorporated into existing production programs.
- Funding will need to be secured to continue the program.
Master Farmer and Extension/Challenges

- We need better, more economical Best Management Practices that farmers can embrace
- We need better incentives for producers as well as incentives that have greater impact for producers
- Ensure that producers don’t perceive our effort as “selling out” to regulatory programs
- Implementing the program on a watershed basis where Counties cooperate
Arkansas Master Farmer
How Will It Be Presented?

• A Modular Approach.
• Each Module Covers Independent Sections.
• The Program Can Be Presented in a Way That Fits Each Producer Groups Individual Needs.
Arkansas Master Farmer Modules

- There are Ten Modules in the Arkansas Master Farmer Program.
- These Modules are Targeted at the Six Commodity Groups in the State.
Arkansas Master Farmer Modules

- Environmental Issues Facing Agriculture
- Environmental Issues On The Farm
- Watershed Issues in Arkansas
- Environmental Issues On Confined Animal Operations
- Environmental Issues On Row Crop Operations
Arkansas Master Farmer Modules

- Environmental Issues On Timber Operations
- Private Pesticide Applicator Certification
- Private Nutrient Applicator Certification
- Regulation 5 Certification
- Bio-Security for Agriculture/ National Animal and Premises ID Program
Who Will Help Us in the Master Farmer Program

• ADEQ
• ASWCC
• NRCS
• AACD
• Arkansas Game and Fish Commission
• Arkansas Farm Bureau
• Arkansas Poultry Federation
Who Will Help Us in the Master Farmer Program

- Arkansas Cattlemen Association
- Arkansas Dairy Cooperative Association
- Dairy Farmers of America
- All Poultry Companies
- Arkansas Pork Producers
- All Swine Companies in Arkansas
Who Will Help Us in the Master Farmer Program

- All row crop groups
- Implement dealers
- Feed companies or cooperatives
- Lending Groups
Master Farmer and Producers/Advantages

• Will provide a single training that will help producers meet all certification requirements (i.e. nutrient application, private pesticide application, etc.) at one time

• Training is built on modules that can be selected to tailor to the individual needs of farmers

• Training has the potential to provide a comprehensive view of the issues, implementations, requirements, solutions, etc.
Master Farmer and Producers/Disadvantages

• May be little incentive for the typical producer to participate
• Will require a day to a day and a half to complete initial training
• Environmental issues are complex and effectiveness of corrective action difficult to measure in terms of impact to natural resource
The Future of the U of A Master Farmer

• The future is bright!!
• We hope to have many outside sources on board.
• These sources will bring new opportunities and incentives for the producers in Arkansas.
Hopes for the Future

• To have incentive programs in place that would give the producers financial incentives such as lower interest rates on farm loans and lower insurance rates.
• That as a result of being part of the program our producers may be able to market their products for a higher price.
Hopes for the Future

• To have a Master Farmer pilot project in each district of the state by 2006.
• To have a complete marketable product by our introduction date of January 2007
The End....QUESTION?