Teaching Farmers
TAg-Style
Farmer First Model

Farmers organize a group around problem

Farmers seek solution to problem

Develop research with university

Contact Extension Educator

Example: Grazing Groups

Adoption of technology
Participatory Extension Model

Farmers’ Issues → Work Together to Look at Issues and Seek Solution to Problems → Adoption of New Technology → Involve Researchers to help Solve the Problem → Extension Education

If solutions already exist, an educational program can be developed.
Farmer-to-Farmer Extension Method

Extension

Farmers Trained to Teach

Indigenous knowledge of production

Set up demonstrations and classes for other farmers

Farmer as learners

Adoption of New Technology

Research

Farmers are Empowered
Other Extension Models

- Farming Systems Research Extension Model
- Farmer Driven On-Farm Testing Extension Model
- Train the Trainers Extension Model
Aspects of a Good Learning Environment

- Learner must feel comfortable
- Learner must trust the educator
- Learner and educator needs to develop a positive relationship
- Learner helps in program development
- Teaching is reinforced over time
- Learning must specifically relate to the learners situation
Aspects of a Good Learning Environment

- Learners feel empowered
- Teacher must listen to the learner
- Freedom to feel there is a open discussion on subject matter
- Learner must hear, see and do (Make it hands-on)
- Learners are in a small group
- Learners are on their own farms
Individual Teaching Art

- Every educator has a different style of teaching
- The art of teaching is very important
- Each person has their own unique style to teach and has their own ability to inspire and make changes in society for the better.
So what is TAg

Farmer

County Extension

NYS IPM

Assess Needs

Curriculum Development and Outline

Develop TAg Teams (4-8 farms)

Enroll 1 field for each crop (Use as classroom and collect field data to reinforce learning)

Conduct Pre-test of Knowledge (further modify outline)

Meet on a different farm every 2-3 weeks and cover the issues of that time of year (Also reinforce past learning)

Post-test and measure adoption

Impacts Measured
Basis of TAg

• Based on the growers’ needs
• Teams are small to increase personal communication and learning
• Growers are normally neighbors
• Designed to be on growers’ farms
• Instruction is timed to the pest or crop issue
Basis of TAg

- Instruction is supported by data collected from farmers’ fields
- Season long educational program
- Each class reinforces the previous lessons
- Instruction is hand-on
Which Farmers Like to Play TAg?

Diffusion of Innovation

First to Play  Second to Play  May or May Not Play?

BUT……..
Farmers Being Neighbors can Break the Rules of Diffusion of Innovations!
(Farmers Talk to Farmers)
# Local Adaptations of TAg

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Workshop/Demonstration Topic</th>
<th>Farm Host</th>
<th>Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Corn planter calibration</td>
<td>Schieferstine Farm</td>
<td>5/3/01</td>
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<tr>
<td>Crown counts (alfalfa) N fertilization of grass</td>
<td>Van Hatten Farm</td>
<td>5/8/01</td>
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<tr>
<td>Alfalfa weevil IPM + Staging alfalfa</td>
<td>Gary Teel Farm</td>
<td>5/22/01</td>
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<td>Early season corn pests</td>
<td>Frank Frost Farm</td>
<td>5/24/01</td>
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<td>Weed identification / control options</td>
<td>Rod Willson Farm</td>
<td>5/30/01</td>
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<td>Pre-side-dress Nitrate Test / N application</td>
<td>Glen Taylor Farm</td>
<td>6/5/01</td>
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<td>Potato leaf hopper IPM/ armyworm/alfalfa weevil</td>
<td>Bob Pawlowski</td>
<td>6/12/01</td>
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<td>Manure spreader calibration</td>
<td>Schieferstine Farm</td>
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<td>Corn Rootworm IPM</td>
<td>Collins Knolls Farm</td>
<td>7/19/01</td>
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<tr>
<td>Whole plant corn moisture determination/fermentation</td>
<td>Brabent Farm</td>
<td>8/30/01</td>
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Learning in TAg

- Average Pre-test 40 to 50 Percent
- Average Post-test 80 to 90 Percent
- Plus High Levels of Adoption of Practices
What Educational Tools are Useful?

• Pre-made Teaching Modules
• Subject Specific Brochures
• Flip Carts
• Flash Cards
• Pocket Cards
• Pocket Handbooks
• Real Field Data
• Live Specimens
• Use of Field Monitoring tools
Teachable Moments

- Potato Leafhopper Scouting Example
  - Loss ½ ton per acre
  - $150 ton
  - Losing 75 per acre
Value of TAg to the Learner

• “I like TAg because of the small size of groups and the opportunity to talk about various issues throughout the growing season.”

• “Because of TAg, I will not use unnecessary herbicides.”

• “Because of TAg I became much more aware of corn plant populations and planter box treatments importance.”

• TAg made me more aware of how important crop health relates to forage quality.”

• “TAg helped me understand I can get more feed value/acre with lower investment”

• “Tag made us go out and look for problems in the field before they became big problems and too late to manage”

• “TAg provided a practical program in a relaxed atmosphere that allowed for an open dialogue between us and the specialist. I really like that you listen to real farmers’ issues.”
Questions
MAKE YOUR OWN TAg Model
(Flowchart)

- Groups of 3
- Pick a recorder
- Pick a presenter
- Pick One Topic (Subject) Area
- Develop a TAg Model that fits your Subject
- 5 Minutes
- Present your work