

# *Food Stamp Nutrition Education in the 1890 Community*



**Funded by USDA:CSREES  
Family, 4-H and Nutrition Unit**



# Preface

The Families, 4-H and Nutrition unit of the Cooperative State Research, Education and Extension Service (CSREES) is pleased to have commissioned this important report. Documenting the many contributions and the unique opportunities of the 1890 Land-Grant institutions to deliver Food Stamp Nutrition Education (FSNE) as an Extension program highlights the rich history of the 1890 community to address critical issues facing limited resource families. This report can serve as an important springboard for exploring new opportunities for the 1890 institutions to deliver community nutrition education. The 1890 institutions continue to be leaders in delivering educational programs to individuals who face poor nutrition and inadequate diets that result in a myriad of health problems including diabetes, hypertension and childhood/adult obesity.

In the Cooperative Extension System, FSNE is available to food stamp eligible individuals and families through contracts between Land-Grant institutions and state governments for administrative food stamp dollars, working in cooperation with the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS), a USDA partner agency. These cooperative ventures have allowed millions of America's most at-risk to gain skills for more nutritious meals and adoption of healthier lifestyles.

The findings of this report are being shared with CSREES and FNS administrators and national program staff, 1890 and 1862 institution administrators and faculty, as well as, other key stakeholders. This report will also be posted electronically at <https://nifa.usda.gov/resource/fsne-2003-1890-lgu-report>

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## Acknowledgements

Although the title page carries a single author listing, this report represents the combined efforts of numerous individuals whose dedication to the cause of nutrition education, institutional equity and improved health status of all Americans are reflected in the document. The report was the vision of three former CSREES/USDA employees – Dr. K. Jane Coulter, former deputy administrator for Families, 4-H and Nutrition; and Mrs. Karen Konzelmann and Dr. Larry Jones, former national coordinators for FSNE.

The financial and moral support of Dr. Anna Mae Kobbe, acting deputy administrator, Families, 4-H and Nutrition, transformed this vision into reality. Preparation of the report was enhanced by the contributions of Dr. Helen Chipman, national coordinator for FSNE CSREES/USDA, who gave numerous hours in reviewing various drafts and offering invaluable editorial assistance and encouragement. Three employees at the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff supported the project in various capacities – Dr. Bihu Huang, data analysis; Mrs. Beverly Cotledge, typing and computer support; and Mrs. Debbie Archer, document formatting and production. Each contributed much to the final product.

Finally, the effort of all 1890 Extension administrators in responding to both questionnaires is acknowledged. Without their dedication and commitment to improving the lives of limited resource and hard-to-reach audiences throughout the 1890 service area FSNE would not be available for tens of thousands of food stamp recipients.

# FOOD STAMP NUTRITION EDUCATION IN THE 1890 COMMUNITY

## REPORT

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**W**ith the recent escalation of obesity and nutrition-related diseases — notably higher among population subgroups with lower education and lower incomes, and racial and ethnic minorities — increased attention has been given to nutrition education and its potential to improve food choices and food behaviors of the nation’s most vulnerable citizenry. In FY 2003, nearly \$400 million were directed toward Food Stamp Nutrition Education (FSNE); half of which came from Food Stamp administrative funds and half of which came from state and local cost share (match) contributions. FSNE is delivered primarily through the Cooperative Extension Service/Land-Grant University System in partnership with state Food Stamp Program offices.

The 1890 institutions, a unique segment within the Land-Grant University System, began FSNE later than other universities, generally contract for fewer program funds and are decreasing in FSNE participation. This study was commissioned by the Family, 4-H and Nutrition unit of USDA: CSREES to explore both challenges and opportunities for greater involvement of 1890 institutions in the delivery of FSNE. As 1890 institutions have a historical tie to limited resource families and 14 of the 18 1890 Land-Grant institutions are located in the South — home to a higher proportion of minority, elderly and poverty-stricken individuals and families — limited participation of these institutions reduces the potential reach of FSNE to eligible households.

Two surveys were presented to administrators of 1890 Extension programs between February and June 2003. The first, distributed at the administrators’ winter meeting, was designed to identify major barriers to the delivery of nutrition education within the 1890 system. The second, distributed electronically, elicited detailed information on the type of nutrition education programs being conducted, institutional histories with FSNE funding, barriers to participation in FSNE and perceived opportuni-

ties for growth in FSNE program delivery by 1890 institutions. All 18 institutions completed both surveys, although some respondents did not answer all questions.

Planning for participation in FSNE by the 1890 community began in FY 1997, as four institutions in the USDA:FNS Southwest Region formed a consortium to collectively explore options for generating cost-share funds and to design a program that met FSNE requirements. The “Families First-Nutrition Education and Wellness System” (FF-NEWS) which promotes improved dietary habits within the context of familial and cultural values became the cornerstone of FSNE delivery by the consortium.

Five 1890 institutions received FSNE contracts in FY 1998, at an average of \$283,256 per institution. Participation among 1890 institutions peaked in FY 2002 when FSNE contracts were awarded to 11 institutions for a total of \$3,014,130 (an average of \$274,012 per institution). Nine institutions were awarded contracts in FY 2003, but only seven are expected to seek funding in FY 2004.

Both surveys clearly identify inability to meet cost-share requirements as the major impediment to FSNE participation. Initially the absence of state funds for cost share was a deterring factor for most 1890 institutions. Passage of the Agricultural, Research, Extension and Education Reform Act (AREERA) in 1998 and the 2002 Farm Bill compounded this problem. As most institutions now must direct all non-federal resources to meeting matching requirements for federal formula funds, it is more difficult, and often impossible, to generate additional cost-share support for FSNE.

USDA’s expectation that institutions and states invest in federally funded programs is consistent with the federal-state partnership created for the Land-Grant University System. That said, the current economic climate in many states — revenue shortfalls and budget recessions, crises in K-12 education and numerous other demands on dwindling state resources —

and increases in state matching requirements result in near crises situations for some institutions and a concomitant void in the delivery of FSNE to hundreds of thousands of Food Stamp recipients.

The second greatest barrier identified by 1890 institutions was the evolving nature of FNS guidance for fiscal accountability and program delivery, and the interpretation of FSNE guidance by various state agencies. Achieving mutual understanding of the requirements of different federal circulars that establish fiscal accountability standards for different federal agencies and their university partners has been especially challenging. Additionally, institutional contacts have been hindered by tightened interpretation of FNS guidance relating to eligible program activities, participants and delivery methods and locations. Time spent responding to these interpretations has reduced time spent in

program delivery and resulted in reduced audience participation in at least one state. As partnerships become established, the complexities of nutrition education are recognized, and all partners show a willingness to address agency and institutional differences, FSNE should experience greater stability within the 1890 community.

If existing barriers to funding and delivery are removed, survey respondents suggest that the 1890 community has the capacity to serve an additional 151 counties and 1,273,058 Food Stamp recipients. With its legislative mandate and historical ties to low-income and minority households and its experience and competence in providing education to limited income and hard to reach audiences in a comprehensive and culturally sensitive manner, the 1890 system is well-positioned to make a significant difference in the fight to improve the health status of American households.

# FOOD STAMP NUTRITION EDUCATION IN THE 1890 SYSTEM: Historical Overview, Challenges, and Opportunities for Expansion

## Introduction

### Study Background

**D**iet-related health problems (obesity, type II diabetics, cardiovascular disease and hypertension) have increased dramatically in the United States. Obesity among the adult population increased from 12 to 20 percent in the last decade and the percentage of obese children (13 percent) more than doubled in the last 30 years (Fierro, 2002). Population subgroups with lower education and lower incomes as well as racial and ethnic minorities are at higher risks of obesity and chronic health problems, and have higher mortality rates than their counterparts in the general population (Feinstein, 1993). For African-American and Hispanic populations, the adult obesity rate is 30 percent and 23 percent, respectively, while the rate of childhood obesity is 20 percent in both populations (Fierro, 2002). Although multiple approaches are required to reverse the obesity problem, improved diets and access to nutritious foods are central to the prevention and treatment of obesity and other diet-related health problems.

Through Food Assistance and Nutrition Programs (FANPs), the USDA:Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) provides low-income citizens with food or the means to purchase foods “as a food safety net.” Currently, 15 FANPs are funded at tens of billions of dollars each year (ERS:USDA, 2002).

Of these FANPs, the Food Stamp Program reaches the greatest number of people, more than 21.5 million persons (Food Research and Action Center, 2003). Interest in nutrition education within the Food Stamp Program increased over the past decade, as many Food Stamp

recipients continue to purchase food items based on family preferences, cultural practices and other factors often unrelated to health status and USDA dietary guidelines.

In most states, the Cooperative Extension Service/Land-Grant University System has partnered with state Food Stamp Program offices to implement Food Stamp Nutrition Education (FSNE). Comprehensive nutrition education for recipients of the Food Stamp Program is required to insure optimal utilization of the massive financial investment made by the federal government and to maximize the health benefits of this program to recipient households. The need for nutrition education is essential to helping families achieve optimal value from the Food Stamps received.

The Cooperative Extension Service/Land-Grant University System has a long history of providing nutrition education through another program, the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP). Cost-benefit studies of the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program in three states (Tennessee, Virginia and Iowa) document the cost savings to families and society of nutrition education (Iowa State University Extension, 2000; Lumbar, 1999; and Burney, 1998). The Virginia study (Lambur, 1999) found that benefits from reduced health care costs may range as high as \$10.75 for every dollar invested in nutrition education. Consequently, every dollar invested in nutrition education is an investment in improved health status of low-income households and in reducing federal medical care and treatment expenditures. With these documented benefits to families and society, the country is better served when federally funded nutrition education is available to as many eligible families as possible.

Despite the natural connection between the mission and legislative mandate of 1890 Cooperative Extension Programs (CEPs) and the educational needs of vulnerable populations, and despite increasing federal investments in Food Stamp Nutrition Education (FSNE), 1890 institutions struggle to secure and maintain contracts to deliver FSNE to its primary audience. Since 1998, 12 of the 18 1890 institutions received FSNE funds at some time to deliver nutrition education, but the number of institutions and the level of funding is decreasing. Eleven institutions received FSNE funds in FY 2002, nine institutions were awarded contracts in FY 2003, (Appendix 1), and only seven institutions are expected to seek funding in FY 2004, resulting in the second lowest level of participation by the 1890 community since the institutions were initially funded for FSNE in FY 1998.

This decreasing pattern of institutional participation signals underlying challenges to the effective and continuous participation of 1890 institutions in FSNE. This brief study explored both challenges to and opportunities for greater involvement in FSNE by the 1890 community and, consequently, broader delivery of nutrition education to Food Stamp recipients. Data collection occurred between February and June, 2003. All 1890 institutions responded to the survey instruments.

## The Current Environment

### USDA Supported Nutrition Education Programs

Two major USDA nutrition education programs – Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) administered by CSREES:USDA and Food Stamp Nutrition Education (FSNE), a component of the Food Stamp Program administered via FNS:USDA are delivered exclusively (EFNEP) or primarily (FSNE) through Cooperative Extension at state Land-Grant institutions. Team Nutrition and Women Infants and Children (WIC) are other FNS:USDA programs that have a nutrition education component, but Cooperative Extension is

not the major source of program delivery. Thus, EFNEP and FSNE are major vehicles available to Cooperative Extension at both 1862 and 1890 institutions to deliver nutrition education to low-income and hard-to-reach audiences.

EFNEP was created in 1969 to assist low-income families and youth in acquiring knowledge, skills, attitudes and changed behaviors necessary to achieve nutritionally sound diets and to contribute to personal development and improvement in nutritional welfare. EFNEP is currently funded at \$58.5 million, more than \$2.6 million less than its funding level in the mid-1990s.

FSNE, by contrast, is relatively new. In 1992, \$661,000 Food Stamp administrative funds were distributed among seven land-grant institutions to provide nutrition education. From these humble beginnings, FSNE Food Stamp administrative expenditures grew to more than \$198 million distributed across 49 states and territories by FY 2003. FSNE funding varies across states, from \$70,000 for a relatively new program to over \$62 million for an established program with a large state nutrition network. The average state award in FY 2003 was \$3.9 million. FSNE is designed to provide education in nutrition, food safety, shopping and budgeting, food security and healthy lifestyles to Food Stamp eligible people. Participants include Food Stamp recipients and applicants. Waivers can also be requested where at least 50 percent of the population targeted has a household income at or below 185 percent of poverty (FNS FY 2003 Guidance, March 2002). For example, the waivers would include children participating in free and reduced price school lunch programs.

Prior to FY 1998, 1890 institutions were legislatively prohibited from participating in EFNEP and no 1890 institution had a contract to deliver FSNE despite the historical connection between these institutions and low-income and hard-to-reach audiences. A major barrier to EFNEP funding was eliminated with the Agricultural, Research, Extension and Education Reform Act (AREERA) of 1998. The act removed a legislative prohibition to 1890 participation in EFNEP by stipulating that 1890 institutions could participate in new EFNEP

appropriations. Since that time there has been no increase in appropriations; thus the only USDA funded nutrition education program that currently allows 1890 participation is FSNE.

Additionally, because the funding level of FSNE greatly exceeds that of EFNEP, FSNE offers greater opportunity to deliver nutrition education to the target audience.

With the advent of FSNE, enthusiasm abounded within the 1890 community. The funds were viewed as additional resources to support and/or expand nutrition education to populations in greatest need. However, upon review of program guidelines, institutions were discouraged to seek funding because of the cost-share requirement which is, that “the federal government reimburses states for 50 percent of allowable costs incurred by the state” (FNS FY 2004 Guidance, March 2003). Prior to the 1998 AREERA, 1890 institutions were exempt from a cost-share requirement for federal formula funds (The cost-share requirement for 1890 Extension formula funds are typically referred to as state-matching funds). Very few 1890 institutions received any state funds for Extension work and most had no identifiable resources from which to meet the FSNE cost-share requirement. Even though state funds were limited or unavailable, some 1890 institutions established partnerships with other programs within their institutions or with their 1862 counterparts to garner some matching funds to secure small-initial contracts. All of the 18 institutions report that their participation in FSNE is limited by their ability to secure the required non-federal cost share; two also report that FSNE is a lower priority than other educational programs based on system needs and resources available (Appendix 1).

## **FSNE and the 1890 System**

The first FSNE contracts to 1890 institutions were awarded in FY 1998 to Kentucky State University, The University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff, Prairie View A&M University, South Carolina State University and Langston University. These contracts ranged from a high

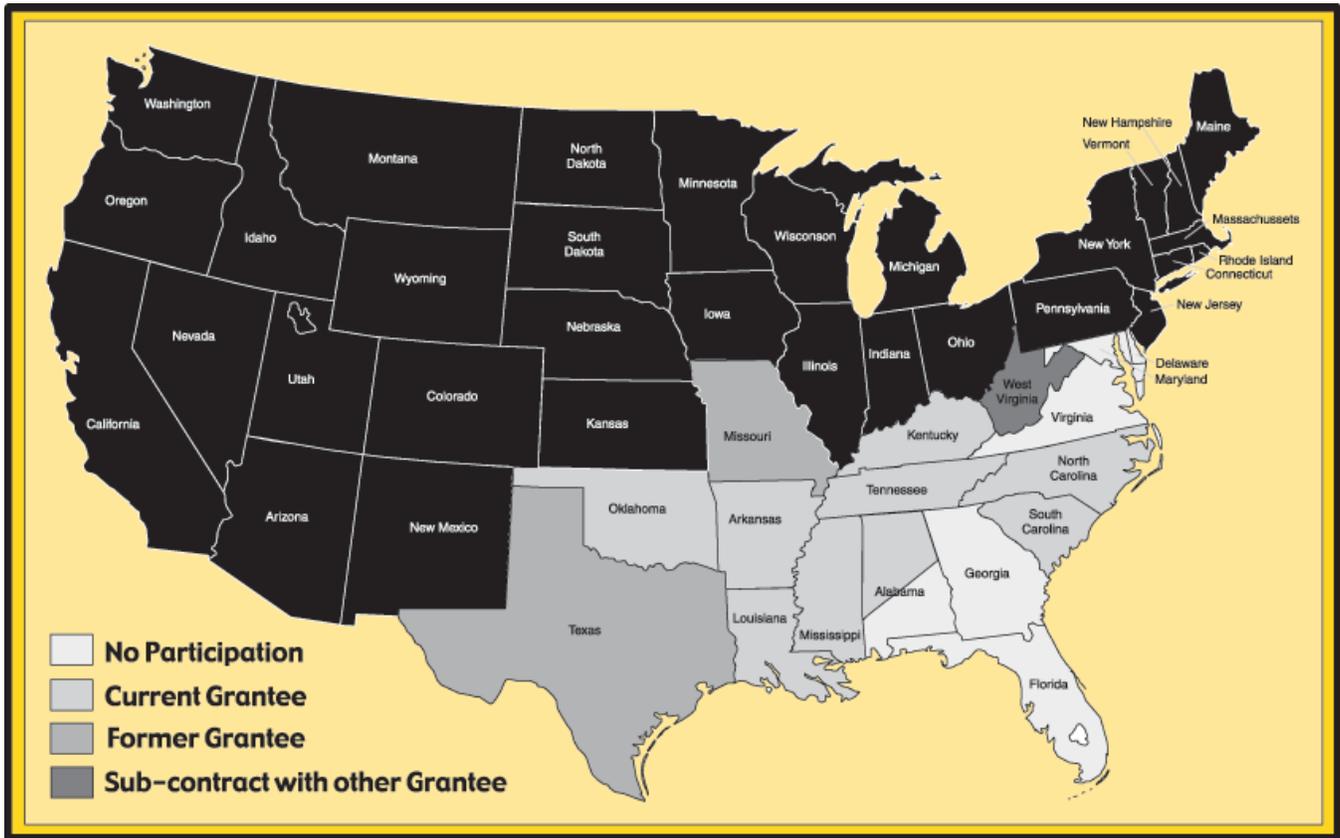
of \$700,000 at Langston University to a low of \$71,794 at South Carolina State University (Appendix 2). These five contracts totaled \$1,416,278. In FY 1999, three additional institutions — Southern University, Lincoln University and North Carolina A&T State University — received contracts bringing the total FSNE funding to 1890s to \$1,776,444 for the eight contracting institutions.

Since that time, the number and dollar value of annual FSNE contracts have varied from year to year as additional 1890 institutions have been awarded contracts and others have chosen not to seek continued funding. The largest number and dollar value of FSNE contracts to the 1890 community were awarded to 11 institutions in FY 2002 for a total of \$3,014,130. Of the 18 institutions, nine have contracts for FY 2003, six have never received funding, two are former contracting institutions who did not request funding in FY 2003 and one institution receives limited funding under a subcontract with another grantee. The map on page 6 stratifies FSNE participation across the 1890 community between FY 1998 and FY 2003.

## **The 1890 Approach to Nutrition Education**

During FY 1997, four 1890 institutions in the FNS Southwest region (Southern University – LA; Langston University – OK; Prairie View A&M University – TX; and The University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff) formed a consortium to collectively explore options for generating cost-share funds and to design a Food Stamp Nutrition Education Program meeting FSNE requirements.

With its historical and legislative ties to low-income and minority individuals and families, the consortium developed an innovative response to FSNE based on its unique understanding of the constituent population. From this collaboration several strategies for generating matching funds were identified and a family-centered nutrition education program — “Families First-Nutrition Education and Wellness System” (FF-NEWS) — was created.



**No Participation:** Virginia State University, University of Maryland - Eastern Shore, Florida A&M University, Fort Valley State University, Delaware State University and Tuskegee University

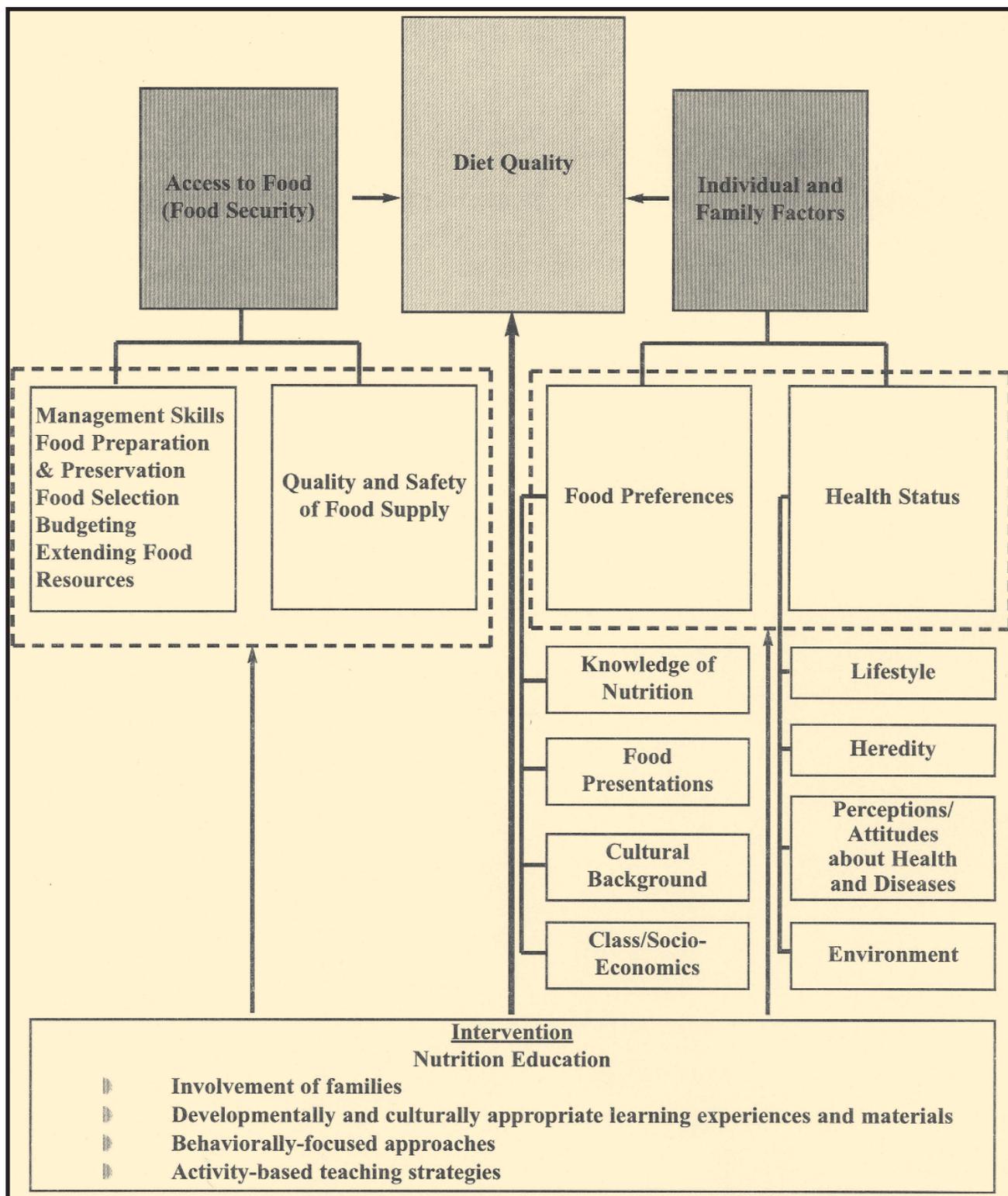
**Current Grantee:** Alabama A& M University, Alcorn State University, South Carolina State University, University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff, Southern University and A&M College, Kentucky State University, North Carolina A&T State University, Tennessee State University and Langston University

**Former Grantee:** Lincoln University and Prairie View A&M University

**Sub-contract with other Grantee:** West Virginia State College

The core of the program is a 56-lesson curriculum that promotes improved dietary habits within the context of familial and cultural values. The lessons are organized into four instructional modules — Balancing Food Preferences with Knowledge of Nutrition, Health Status and Age-Related Nutritional Needs, Enhancing Food Management Skills and Food Quality and Safety. A research-based conceptual framework guided the development of the curriculum (see Page 7) and a three-tiered audience participation matrix (see Page 8) directs the use of the curriculum in responding to the level of interest and time constraints of varying food stamp recipients. Program delivery sites vary across the states, but multiple delivery sites are used by most institutions to increase audience participation.

- Numbers of 1890 Institutions using different delivery sites:**
- 12 Faith-Based Community
  - 12 Senior Citizens/Community Centers
  - 11 County Food Stamp Office/  
Food Distribution Centers
  - 9 Local Housing Projects
  - 7 1862 Extension Offices
  - 5 School Settings



**Conceptual Framework for FF-NEWS Curriculum**

Level of Participation	
<b>Level 1</b>	Single contacts made through staffed exhibits, on-site demonstrations and other short-term, direct contacts plus mass-media activities.
<b>Level 2</b>	Special-interest programs, including instructional sessions for groups desiring specific training in prescribed content areas.  Lessons may come from a single module or curriculum, or a combination of modules/curricula depending on the interests of the audience.
<b>Level 3</b>	Short courses, delivered to participants who participate in a planned, scheduled, educational series of lessons from one or more curriculum modules.

### Three-tiered Audience Participation Matrix

The Families First-Nutrition Education and Wellness System (FF-NEWS) is approved by the Association of 1890 Extension Administrators as the model Nutrition Education Guide for the 1890 System. FF-NEWS is culturally sensitive and incorporates elements of Social Learning Theory (SLT) in the design of the teaching strategies and activities recommended. The value of the curriculum is its application of instructional approaches that move “knowledge learned” to “behavioral change.”

White and Maloney (1990) explored the value of applying SLT to dietary behaviors and confirmed the relationship between three mediating variables (locus of control, reinforcement values and social context) and changes in food consumption. Strategies used relied heavily upon a major premise of SLT which suggests that behavior results from a person’s belief that he/she can or cannot influence the desired outcome in a given situation. This belief is an individual’s locus of control. A person’s locus of control is either internal or external. The person with an internal locus of control believes that the desired outcome is within his/her capacity to control. While a person with an external locus of control believes that the outcome is not in his/her hands but, rather, is controlled by some powerful other factor (e.g., fate, chance, luck, God’s will, etc.). This concept is relevant because approaches for affecting behavior

change are likely to be very different for the two types of individuals. The following findings from the White and Maloney (1990) research were incorporated into the design of the FF-NEWS program:

**Locus of Control** — In their study, persons with an internal locus of control scored higher on use of nutritious foods. In application, subjects were less likely to select nutritious foods if they believed they had no control over their health status.

**Reinforcement Values** — The salience and strength of values reinforcement led to differences in food selection behaviors for the subjects. In this context, subjects were more likely to cook more nutritious meals if they had to cook, had time to cook, desired to be healthy and were encouraged to cook.

**Social Context** — The behavior of subjects was negatively affected in adverse social contexts (i.e., behavioral change was less likely to occur if the family disliked the nutritious food prepared).

Knowledge of these relationships was incorporated into the FF-NEWS program in the following ways:

1. Lessons stress modifications in preferred diets vs. the addition of new foods.
2. Lessons focus on the needs of the entire families.

3. Lessons present what to do, rather than what not to do.
4. Learning communities among participants are created to promote reinforcement of concepts learned and to create a reinforcing social environment that encourages healthy food selection and continued participation in the program.
5. Learning strategies and activities affirm self-determination and encourage participants to be in charge of their lives.

In summary, FF-NEWS promotes good nutrition in a social and cultural context that has meaning and application to program participants. FF-NEWS resources include activities, recipes and instructional strategies appropriate for use in both urban and rural settings, and with low-income Hispanic and Anglo-, African- and Native-American families. Modifications to recipes from traditional Native-American, Tex-Mex and soul-food diets are central to the program's success. Additionally, program resources and the curriculum are available in Spanish from Prairie View A&M University.

The FF-NEWS Consortium is open to all 1890 institutions regardless of source of funds for nutrition education. Currently 11 of the 18 institutions are members of the consortium and two additional institutions have received training on the use of the curriculum. Faculty from six 1862 institutions attended the national FF-NEWS training conference in 2001, and one 1862 institution adopted FF-NEWS as the primary program resource for FSNE in its state.

## Study Methods and Findings

### Study Methods

Two surveys were presented to administrators of 1890 Extension programs. The initial survey administered in February 2003 during the Association's winter meeting was designed to identify institutional involvement in FSNE, FF-NEWS, and/or nutrition education in general;

and to identify major barriers to the delivery of nutrition education within the 1890 system. All 18 institutions responded. A second survey, distributed in May 2003, was e-mailed to 1890 administrators and project directors or coordinators of nutrition education at each institution. Data collection continued through June 2003. This survey elicited more detailed information regarding the type of nutrition education program, institutional histories with FSNE funding, barriers to FSNE participation and perceived opportunities for growth in FSNE program delivery. All 18 institutions completed the second survey, although some respondents did not answer all questions.

## Findings and Implications

**Status and Funding of 1890 Nutrition Education Programs.** Fifteen of the 18 institutions provided nutrition education in FY 2003 – nine via FSNE contracts and six with institutional or other funds. One has a FSNE subcontract with the 1862 institution, and eleven are participants in the FF-NEWS Consortium (Appendix 1). Florida A&M University, the University of Maryland-Eastern Shore and Lincoln University did not offer nutrition education during FY 2003. Of those three, Lincoln University is a former FSNE grantee. It did not seek funding in FY 2003 because it could not generate adequate cost-share funds. The university continues to seek ways to overcome the cost-share situation. Florida A&M University expressed interest in developing a program if cost-share resources can be acquired. In total, 17 of the 18 institutions either have an ongoing nutrition education program or are interested in securing FSNE funds to begin nutrition education. Of these institutions currently providing nutrition education, the scope and reach of the programs are very small and need expansion to meet the vast program delivery needs of the target audience. Additionally, programs not supported by FSNE funds are not limited to food stamp audiences and must serve the general population.

**FSNE Funding to 1890 Institutions (FY 1998 – FY 2003).** In total, more than \$13.7

## Ranking of Perceived Barriers to FSNE Participation

	Ability to Match	Evolving Guidelines	Other
Rank 1	11	2	1
Rank 2	2	2	1
Rank 3	1	1	5

million in FSNE funds have been awarded to 1890 institutions since FY 1998 (Appendix 2). These funds allowed many institutions to offer new or expanded nutrition education programs, and they allowed the 1890 community to create a model multi-state program initiative that is being replicated in other 1890 program areas. The funds also created the incentive for developing a valuable educational resource for nutrition education with low-income audiences. Although the availability of FSNE funds was the catalyst for the previous accomplishments, these funds did not provide the only means of support for education to Food Stamp recipients. All institutions receiving FSNE funds contributed additional federal formula or state matching funds to enhance program development and delivery and audience contacts.

Over the six-year period, Langston University received the largest amount of total funds (\$4,283,000) and West Virginia State College received the least amount (\$34,180). The average composite annual award ranged from a high of \$3,014,130 in FY 2002 to a low of \$1,416,278 during FY 1998, the initial year of 1890 funding.

**Barriers to FSNE Participation.** In survey I, each administrator was asked if his/her institution had a nutrition education program and, if no, why? Of the six institutions that had no history of FSNE funding, three responded lack of matching funds (cost-share), two stated lack of matching funds and lower priority than other educational needs for their constituency and one indicated lack of matching funds and support by 1862. All current grantees reported that the availability of matching funds for FSNS limits the scope and outreach potential of ongoing programs. One former grantee (Lincoln University)

reported that inability to match was the primary reason it did not reapply for funding in FY 03.

In the second survey, respondents were asked to rank from (1 – most important to 3 – least important) factors that limit their institution’s involvement in FSNE. Four of the six never-funded institutions did not answer this question.

Eleven of the 14 (78.5 percent) responding institutions ranked “ability to match” as the most important barrier to participating in FSNE. Two additional respondents ranked “ability to match” as second in importance and one respondent ranked it third. The evolving nature and interpretation of FNS and state guidelines was ranked most important by two institutions, second in importance by two institutions and third in importance by another institution. Other responses were ranked first and second by one respondent each and third by five respondents. Other barriers included location of suitable offices, competition with 1862 for match, perceived ownership of program by 1862, turnover rate of state Food Stamp officials, unstable funding across all 1890 CEPs, lack of human resources and reimbursement methodology required by state agency. Inadequate staff or human resources was the most frequently cited “other” response and evolving guidelines was the second most frequently cited “other” response.

While the evolving nature and interpretation of FNS and state guidelines and requirements are problematic for some institutions, the inability to match is clearly the major impediment to 1890 participation in FSNE. The absence of state funds for most 1890 institutions prior to the passage of AREERA in 1998 was a deterring factor to securing the FSNE cost share. However, the passage of the AREERA in 1998 and the

2002 Farm Bill compounded the problem. Prior to 1998, most 1890 Extension programs operated exclusively on federal formula or grant funds which make the garnering of nonfederal resources to meet the FSNE match requirement very difficult. Nonetheless some institutions were able to garner institutional support as well as some limited support from their 1862 counterparts to provide the required nonfederal cost share.

The 1998 AREERA legislation established a matching requirement for 1890 federal formula funds of 30 percent in 2000, 45 percent in 2001, and 50 percent in 2002 and beyond. The passage of the 2002 Farm Bill increased the nonfederal matching requirement to 60 percent for FY 2003 with annual increases of 10 percent per year until the requirement reaches 100 percent in FY 2007. The current economic climate of the nation and most states leave 1890 institutions vulnerable to losses in federal formula funds if states are unwilling or unable to provide offset funds to match federal appropriations. As most institutions must direct all available nonfederal resources to meeting the match for formula funds, it becomes more difficult, and often impossible, to generate additional matching support for FSNE.

USDA's expectation that institutions and states invest in federally funded programs is consistent with the federal-state partnership created for the Land-Grant University System. But not all institutions are equally served when the expectation is applied in the context of differing relationships and participation in the system. Revenue shortfalls, budget recisions, crises in K-12 education and numerous other demands on dwindling state resources with concomitant increases in state matching requirements result in near crises situations for some institutions and a concomitant void in the delivery of FSNE to hundreds of thousands of Food Stamp recipients. Fourteen of the 18 1890 Land-Grant institutions are located in the South – home to a higher proportion of minority, elderly, and poverty-stricken individuals and families. When 1890 institutions are limited in their ability to serve this population, disproportionate

negative consequences are borne by some of the nation's most vulnerable populations.

The evolving nature of FNS guidance for program delivery and/or the interpretation of FSNE guidance by various state agencies was cited as a barrier by five respondents. FSNE funding provides opportunity to enhance the partnership between the federal government, state governments and the land-grant universities. CSREES is the primary federal partner engaged with Land-Grant universities. This partnership is well-established and operating principles and structures that support the partnership arrangement are understood by all partners. For FSNE, FNS and state Food Stamp Program offices are new partners with whom Land-Grant universities have had to develop new agreements and working relationships. One challenge has been understanding the requirements of different federal circulars that establish fiscal accountability standards for different federal agencies and their university partners. As the program matures, the partnerships are becoming more established. There is broadening understanding of the associated complexities, and there is a willingness from all partners to address these agency and institutional differences. This broadening understanding should provide stability to program delivery in the future and reduce many of the challenges institutions face in the delivery of FSNE.

**FSNE Contacts.** Contact data were reported by eight institutions. Seven institutions have never received FSNE funds and could not respond to this item. For the eight responding institutions, the highest number of total contacts (420,708) occurred in FY 02 (Appendix 3). Alcorn State University and Tennessee State University reported the largest (357,120) and smallest (600) number of institutional contacts, respectively. FY 2002 was the initial contract year for Tennessee State University. Even though not all institutions reported annual contact data for some years, the data presented provide useful information. Fluctuations in the number of audience contacts per annum generally resulted from tightening interpretation of FNS guidance relating to eligible program activities,

participants and methods of program delivery. Program staff required intensive in-service training to adapt to state interpretations of the guidance. Time spent responding to these changes reduced time spent in program delivery. Differences in the approaches to working with low-income audiences by 1890 institutions and state Food Stamp agencies created additional challenges and resulted in declining audience participating in one state.

For the past few years, contractors have been encouraged to conduct educational delivery in county Food Stamp offices or food distribution sites to catch recipients as they come to certify or receive commodity foods. Because certification is a periodic occurrence, the type of long-term engagement with recipients required for social reinforcement and behavioral change is difficult to accomplish. The FF-NEWS program is designed to engage the household member principally responsible for selecting and preparing the family's meals in sustained and continuous nutrition education while focusing less on one-time awareness type educational activities. Recent interpretations of FSNE guidance make it more difficult to deliver nutrition education in this way.

#### **Current and Potential Audience Reach.**

Respondents were asked to indicate the total number of counties in their state, the number of counties served by FSNE contractors and the number of counties not served by a FSNE contractor. Ten institutions reported data for all three questions and two institutions, North Carolina A&T University and Fort Valley State University, only provided the total number of counties in the state (Appendix 4). Based on responding institutions, FSNE is available in all counties in Alabama, Kentucky, Mississippi and Tennessee. Of the six additional institutions reporting number of counties not served by FSNE, the number of counties not served ranges from a low of three in Delaware to a high of 31 in Virginia while the percentage of counties not served was highest in Delaware (100 percent) and lowest in Texas (11 percent). Delaware is the only state that does not contract for FSNE. It must be noted that the presence of FSNE in a

county does not guarantee that all eligible households receive FSNE. When the size of the program and the size of the target audience does not match, there is a strong likelihood that an unmet service need exists even in counties where FSNE is available.

Respondents were also asked to estimate the number of additional counties and people they could serve if existing barriers to participation were removed. Twelve institutions responded (Appendix 5). The responding institutions estimated that the 1890 community has the capacity to serve an additional 151 counties and 1,273,058 food stamp recipients if institutions are not required to contend with the major challenges to program funding and delivery.

These data, though incomplete, document the service gap in FSNE in many states that have an 1890 Land-Grant institution. Identification of the number of Food Stamp recipients lacking access to FSNE across all counties (those served and not served by a FSNE contractor) would yield a more comprehensive view of the service gap in program delivery to the target audience that could be met by expanded programming in 1890 institutions. The magnitude of the task and the limited time frame for preparing this report prevented that depth of analysis. Even so, this study suggests that there is a program delivery gap in the 17 states with 1890 institutions, and that there is the potential for reaching hundreds of thousands of new FSNE participants if new and expanded contracts are made available to the 1890 community.

## **Summary and Conclusions**

The increasing incidence of diet-related health problems (obesity, type II diabetics, cardiovascular disease and hypertension) signal an approaching crisis in the health status of American households. When these problems are stratified by region, race and ethnicity, income and place of residence (urban vs. rural) – low-income, racial minorities living in the rural South – are more likely than other Americans to

be affected. Although the American public supports massive investments in food assistance programs to vulnerable populations and to a lesser degree, an investment in nutrition education, many eligible households lack access to nutrition education and, more specifically, nutrition education that is sensitive to the cultural context in which family meals are prepared.

The 1890 Extension System has at its disposal a unique Nutrition Education Program that is sensitive to the cultural context and social environment of low-income families in the 1890 service area. Food Stamp Nutrition Education funding is the major vehicle through which these institutions provide nutrition education to this audience. With its legislative mandate and historical ties to low-income and minority households, the 1890 system is a valuable resource and can make a significant difference in the fight to improve the health status of American households. But, maximum utilization of this resource has not occurred.

This study explored both challenges to and opportunities for greater involvement in FSNE by the 1890 community and, consequently, broader delivery of nutrition education to Food Stamp recipients. Data collection occurred between February and May 2003.

Two surveys were presented to administrators of 1890 Extension programs. The first survey was designed to identify institutional involvement in FSNE, FF-NEWS, and/or nutrition education in general; and to identify major barriers to the delivery of nutrition education within the 1890 system. A second survey, distributed in May 2003, elicited more detailed information regarding the type of nutrition education program, institutional histories with FSNE funding, barriers to FSNE participation and perceived opportunities for growth in FSNE program delivery. All 18 institutions completed both surveys, although some respondents did not answer all questions.

The participation of 1890 institutions in FSNE has been approached cautiously. The first FSNE funds contracted to 1890 institutions were awarded to five institutions in 1998. The percent of total 1890s receiving FSNE funds in a given

year ranged from 61 percent in FY 2002 to 28 percent during the initial year of funding. Currently, the percentage of institutions funded is 50 percent and is likely to decrease further in FY 2004. The greatest challenge for these institutions is acquiring the nonfederal cost share required to receive federal funding. Recent changes in federal legislation requiring additional matching funds for 1890 Extension formula funds and economic crises in most states are funding challenges for all 1890 institutions. With this tenuous matching situation for federal formula funds, identification of additional cost-share resources for FSNE contracts will be limited.

The emerging nature of the partnership between FNS, state Food Stamp agencies and Land-Grant universities has been challenging for each partner. The 1890 community has worked hard to embrace the challenges and to anticipate opportunities to strengthen relationships with FNS and state Food Stamp agencies. Challenges related to partnership development and understanding are likely to diminish as FSNE matures, and all partners grow in understanding and appreciation of the environment within which each partner must work.

Broader and more sustained participation by the 1890 community in FSNE is sorely needed to meet the program delivery gap between the number of eligible households and the number of households currently served. Yet, limited cost-share resources for matching reduces the size of contracts secured and, consequently, outreach to the target audience. If challenges to participation of 1890 institutions in FSNE remain, many food stamp eligible households will be denied access to nutrition education and its potential to change lives and significantly reduce federal expenditures on medical care and treatment of the target population.

Although frustrating to the institutions, their limited participation in FSNE has not diminished their commitment, which is evident in the number of institutions that support nutrition education to low-income households from existing program budgets and the number of other institutions that augment FSNE funds with program resources above the cost-share requirement.

Such expenditures are directed to nutrition education to the target audience in an extremely competitive resource environment.

The 1890 institutions bring unique strengths to FSNE – a legislative and historical connection to a large percentage of the FSNE target audience, experience and competence in educational delivery to limited income and hard-to-reach audiences, and a comprehensive and culturally sensitive nutrition education curriculum that places high priority on reducing diet-related health problems by promoting long-term behavioral change. These strengths can have a positive impact on USDA’s ability to meet the legislative mandate of food stamp legislation and on the health status of low-income households. The 1890 community looks forward to expanding its partnership with FNS and state Food Stamp agencies to this end.

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Appendix 1. Institutional Involvement in Nutrition Education in FY 2003							
Institution	Currently Offer Nutrition Education Program	If No, Why	Funded by FSNE:FNS	Subcontract w/1862	Other Source of Funding	Member of FF-NEWS Consortium	
Alabama A&M University	YES	limited by match	YES	NO	NO	YES*	
Alcorn State University (MS)	YES	limited by match	YES	NO	NO	YES	
Delaware State University	YES	lack of match	NO	NO	YES	NO	
Florida A&M University	NO	lack of match but has an interest	NO	NO	CEP-Budget	Would like to be a member	
Fort Valley State University (GA)	YES	lack of match and lower priority	NO	NO	CEP-Budget	NO	
Kentucky State University	YES	limited by match	YES		NO	NO	
Langston University (OK)	YES	limited by match	YES	NO	NO	YES*	
Lincoln University (MO)	NO	lack of match	NO	NO	NO	YES, until 2002	
North Carolina A&T State University	YES	limited by match	YES	NO	CEP-Budget	NO	
Prairie View A&M University (TX)	YES	limited by match	NO	NO	CEP-Budget and Texas Higher Education	YES	
South Carolina State University	YES	limited by match	YES	NO	NO	YES	
Southern University and A&M College (LA)	YES	limited by match	YES	NO	NO	YES*	
Tennessee State University	YES	limited by match	YES	NO	NO	YES	
Tuskegee University (AL)	YES	limited by match	NO	NO	CEP-Budget	YES	
University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff	YES	limited by match	YES	NO	NO	YES*	
University of Maryland - Eastern Shore	NO	lack of match and lower priority	NO	NO	NO	NO	
Virginia State University	YES	lack of match and support by 1862	NO	NO	CEP-Budget	YES	
West Virginia State College	YES	limited by match	NO	YES	NO	YES	

\*Original members of FF:NEWS Consortium

Appendix 2. Dollar Value of FSNE Funding by 1890 Institution and Year

Institution	Federal Fiscal Year							Total Funding
	'98	'99	'00	'01	'02	'03		
Alabama A&M University	NC	NC	NC	NC	123,809	212,212	336,021	
Alcorn State University (MS)	NC	NC	NC	528,425	547,690	601,078	1,677,193	
Delaware State University	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC	
Florida A&M University	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC	
Fort Valley State University (GA)	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC	
Kentucky State University	184,660	241,182	329,555	385,208	474,413	218,365	1,833,383	
Langston University (OK)	700,000	700,000	700,000	700,000	733,000	750,000	4,283,000	
Lincoln University (MO)	NC	86,107	231,415	210,335	213,036	NC	740,893	
North Carolina A&T State University	NC	68,960	240,769	339,486	253,011	279,830	1,182,056	
Prairie View A&M University (TX)	297,706	309,076	243,404	201,990	NC	NC	1,052,176	
South Carolina State University	71,794	66,981	68,524	24,457	11,673	NC	243,429	
Southern University and A&M College (LA)	NC	128,830	124,702	115,313	147,781	150,805	667,431	
Tennessee State University	NC	NC	NC	NC	314,179	307,553	621,732	
Tuskegee University (AL)	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC	
University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff	162,118	175,308	188,234	146,956	184,038	237,960	1,094,614	
University of Maryland - Eastern Shore	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC	
Virginia State University	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC	
West Virginia State College	NC	NC	NC	NC	11,500	22,680	34,180	
Total Institutions Reporting	5	8	8	9	11	8 + 1 SC	12	
Total Funds	1,416,278	1,776,444	2,126,603	2,652,170	3,014,130	2,780,483	13,766,108	
Average Annual Awards	283,256	222,056	265,825	294,686	274,012	308,943		

NC – No Contract  
SC – Sub-Contract

Appendix 3. Annual Program Contacts by Institution and Year (1998-2003)

Institution	Federal Fiscal Year						Total Contacts
	'98	'99	'00	'01	'02		
Alabama A&M University	NC	NC	NC	NC	NR		
Alcorn State University (MS)	NC	NC	NC	33,000	324,120		357,120
Delaware State University	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC
Florida A&M University	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC
Fort Valley State University (GA)	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC
Kentucky State University	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC
Langston University (OK)	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR
Lincoln University (MO)		316	3,099	4,268	5,973		13,656
North Carolina A&T State University	NC				35,624		35,624
Prairie View A&M University (TX)	921	8,905	18,322	34,536			62,684
South Carolina State University			1,000	1,412			2,412
Southern University and A&M College (LA)		24,894	26,089	26,794	34,340		112,117
Tennessee State University	NC	NC	NC	NC	600		600
Tuskegee University (AL)	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC
University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff		38,898	19,469	37,238	20,051		115,656
University of Maryland - Eastern Shore	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC
Virginia State University	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC
West Virginia State College	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC
Total Institutions Reporting	1	4	5	6	6	6	8
Total Audience Contacts	921	73,013	67,979	137,248	420,708		699,869
Average Annual Contacts	921	18,253	13,596	22,875	70,118		87,484

NR – No Response  
NC – No Contract

**Appendix 4. Availability of FSNE by State and County**

<b>State</b>	<b># of Counties in State</b>	<b># of Counties with FSNE</b>	<b># of Counties without FSNE</b>
<b>Alabama</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Arkansas</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>Delaware</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Florida</b>	<b>NR</b>	<b>NR</b>	<b>NR</b>
<b>Georgia</b>	<b>159</b>	<b>NR</b>	<b>NR</b>
<b>Kentucky</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Louisiana</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Maryland</b>	<b>NR</b>	<b>NR</b>	<b>NR</b>
<b>Mississippi</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Missouri</b>	<b>115</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>North Carolina</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>NR</b>	<b>NR</b>
<b>Oklahoma</b>	<b>NR</b>	<b>NR</b>	<b>NR</b>
<b>South Carolina</b>	<b>NR</b>	<b>NR</b>	<b>NR</b>
<b>Tennessee</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Texas</b>	<b>254</b>	<b>226</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>Virginia</b>	<b>126</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>31</b>
<b>West Virginia</b>	<b>NR</b>	<b>NR</b>	<b>NR</b>

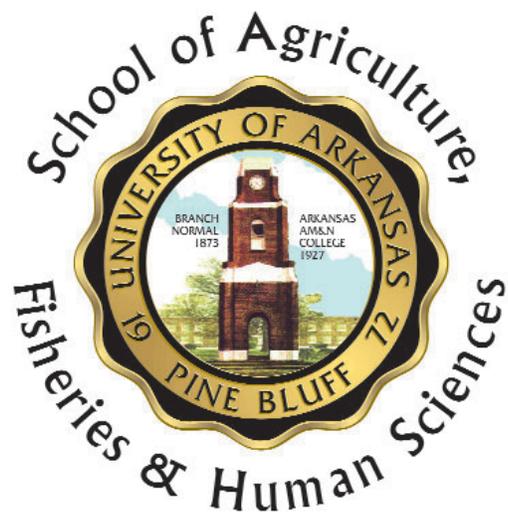
**NR – No Response**

**Appendix 5. Estimate of Current and Potential Counties and Audiences Served**

<b>State</b>	<b>Estimate of Target Audience Served</b>	<b>Estimate of Target Audience Not Served</b>	<b>Estimate of Potential County Expansion</b>	<b>Estimate of Potential Audience Expansion</b>
Alabama	465,590		22	472,509
Arkansas	234,755	74,972	6	18,232
Delaware	234,755	25,000	3	15,000
Florida	NR	NR	10	1,000
Georgia	NR	NR	6	NR
Kentucky	NR	NR	NR	NR
Louisiana	489,038	118,127	10	118,127
Maryland	NR	NR	NR	NR
Mississippi	352,066		1	3,338
Missouri	464,364	37,622	10	27,000
North Carolina	588,550	NR	NR	NR
Oklahoma	NR	NR	31	NR
South Carolina	449,489	NR	10	3,000
Tennessee	736,224	95	13	73,000
Texas	1,483,421	45,126	13	522,049
Virginia	159,000	10,000	12	11,000
West Virginia	167,010	57,221	4	8,803

NR – No Response





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