

Extension and Outreach Efforts in Support of Creating a Sustainable Forestry & Agriculture Biomass Economy in the Southern United States

William G. Hubbard, Regional Forester, University of Georgia

Leslie Boby, Extension Associate – Bioenergy, University of Georgia

Robert Bardon, Extension Forester, North Carolina State University

Extension plays several key roles in support of the new bioenergy economy in the South. As a cadre of regional, state and county professionals we are charged with identifying critical audiences, assessing their needs, developing programs and materials to enhance technology transfer, disseminating information, educating audiences, and facilitating action. Additional responsibilities include program evaluation, reporting and marketing results. While several efforts are underway with numerous target audiences; their reach and effectiveness have proven to be challenging in the bioenergy arena due primarily to cost effective production systems, and a lack of markets. This has led to limited opportunities for farmers and forest owners who would be willing to incorporate biomass management schemes on their lands. This presentation will present highlights of ten years worth of biomass and bioenergy efforts at the regional, state and local levels in the Southern United States. The presentation will summarize some of the major efforts by land grant university biomass Extension specialists in forestry and agriculture in the Southern United States. In particular, a short overview of these efforts will be provided along with a discussion as to their effectiveness and lessons learned. Barriers to successful Extension and outreach will be presented along with recommendations for overcoming these barriers.