



CARINATA FACTS

Social Science Initiative

Research Design, Outcomes, & Insights (2016-2019)

Objective 1: Document drivers of adoption and assess stakeholder needs

The SPARC Social Science Team has identified and engaged with stakeholders in order to document the drivers and barriers to adopting carinata in the Southeastern United States. The team utilized a mixed methodology. Key informant interviews outlined the myriad of drivers and barriers of adoption while contextualizing the emergence of the crop. Surveys were distributed to producers and extension agents at field day events to evaluate and rank adoption barriers. Interviews with previous growers of carinata followed, where the team sorted and elucidated key barriers to adoption. A multi-stakeholder focus group provided reflections to these key barriers, and discussion of potential solutions. Ultimately these results and findings were published (<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.erss.2020.101665>).

These results highlight potential areas for extension programming and public-private cooperation. The top barriers identified by farmers include unfamiliarity with the crop, previous negative experience with the crop, limited availability of crop insurance, low selling price, and weather risks (early frost). While the latter can be solved with better variety selection, the other barriers require specific extension programming and communication strategies. These could include more regionally specific field days and expanded facilitation of knowledge exchange among producers.



Figure 01: A bee investigates a flower of a carinata crop in full bloom.

Objective 2: Link research and extension for feedback, learning & project improvement.

These research methods were integrated into several key extension activities for project learning. For example, field day event feedback was sought in field day exit surveys. The outcomes from research (such as key informant interviews) were included in reports and shared across the SPARC workstreams. The all-teams meetings, facilitated by lead social scientist, Ben Christ, were designed to catalyze conversations between and among the workstreams for the engagement of the entire team. Finally, field day coordinators were interviewed to build on the results of the surveys and find meaningful ways to enhance engagement.

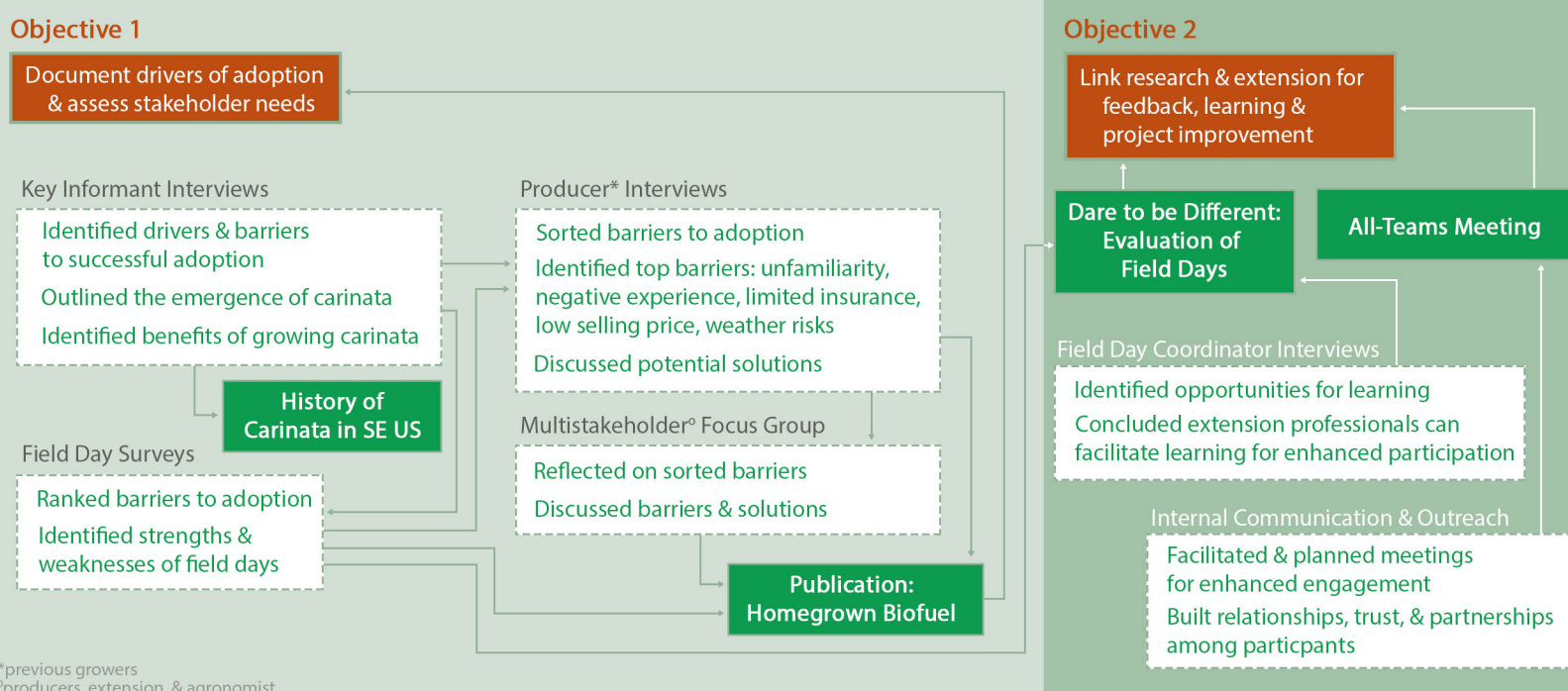


Figure 02: Conceptual map illustrating the different methods utilized in understanding barriers to adoption and how to link knowledge back into the project. Outcomes and insights are highlighted beneath each method.

Next Steps

Looking forward, increased involvement of Social Science Team and continued evaluation of field days could reduce adoption barriers. Likewise, creating extension content to sensitize farmers may bridge knowledge gaps and facilitate learning. Incorporating thoughtful process design to promote continued knowledge exchange and dialog among SPARC team members and stakeholders will enhance project performance.

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