



USDA-CSREES 2007 National Water Quality Conference

[Decentralized Wastewater Training Center Economics](#)

Training centers for onsite wastewater are being built throughout the country at an increasing rate. With this growth comes the need to assess the economics of these centers in order to improve one's chances for success. In North Carolina there are currently 5 training centers of variable size and design. The largest center is in Raleigh and is a direct outgrowth of the first training center in the country. The smallest is in a highly urbanized county adjacent to the Cooperative Extension Offices. This study focuses on the 3 medium-sized training centers in the state. Analysis of income vs cost (operating and construction) shows that not all training centers are economically independent. Explanations for this disparity can be related to the demographics of the region the centers serve. In the sparsely populated northeastern counties the training center has a much harder time attracting practitioners than the center in the Asheville area. In the end the success of a training center may rest on as much as what and who is around the center as on the instructors or programs associated with the center. Nevertheless training is needed. All the centers are also used by extension agents, other public institutions and by the on-site industry for local and regional training. This training does not generate income used for training center maintenance but the intangible benefits need to be acknowledged in any cost analysis.

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