

**Farmers Market Promotion Program (FMPP)
Final Performance Report**

The final performance report summarizes the outcome of your FMPP award objectives. As stated in the FMPP Terms and Conditions, you will not be eligible for future FMPP or Local Food Promotion Program grant funding unless all close-out procedures are completed, including satisfactory submission of this final performance report.

This final report will be made available to the public once it is approved by FMPP staff. Write the report in a way that promotes your project's accomplishments, as this document will serve as not only a learning tool, but a promotional tool to support local and regional food programs. Particularly, recipients are expected to provide both qualitative and quantitative results to convey the activities and accomplishments of the work.

The report is limited to 10 pages and is due **within 90 days** of the project's performance period end date, or sooner if the project is complete. Provide answers to each question, or answer "not applicable" where necessary. It is recommended that you email or fax your completed performance report to FMPP staff to avoid delays:

FMPP Phone: 202-690-4152; Email: USDAFMPPQuestions@ams.usda.gov; Fax: 202-690-4152

Should you need to mail your documents via hard copy, contact FMPP staff to obtain mailing instructions.

Report Date Range: <i>(e.g. September 30, 20XX-September 29, 20XX)</i>	September 30, 2014 – September 29, 2016
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Recipient Organization Name:	Winrock International
Project Title as Stated on Grant Agreement:	Farmers' Market Training and Development Program
Grant Agreement Number: <i>(e.g. 14-FMPPX-XX-XXXX)</i>	14-FMPPX-AR-0007
Year Grant was Awarded:	2014
Project City/State:	Little Rock, Arkansas
Total Awarded Budget:	\$99,983.00

FMPP staff may contact you to follow up for long-term success stories. Who may we contact?

- Same Authorized Representative listed above (check if applicable).
 Different individual: Name: _____; Email: _____; Phone: _____

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1. State the goals/objectives of your project as outlined in the grant narrative and/or approved by FMPP staff. If the goals/objectives from the narrative have changed from the grant narrative, please highlight those changes (e.g. “new objective”, “new contact”, “new consultant”, etc.). You may add additional goals/objectives if necessary. For each item below, qualitatively discuss the progress made and indicate the impact on the community, if any.

i. Goal/Objective 1: Stimulation and Promotion for El Dorado Farmers’ Market and Hempstead County Farmers’ Market. (a) Increase sales, customers, and vendor profitability at participating farmers’ markets. (b) Increase consumer education surrounding local food.

a. Progress Made: Since 2014, the El Dorado Farmers’ Market and Hempstead County Farmers’ Market have both experienced a significant amount of growth for vendors and increased consumer knowledge for new and existing customers of the markets. **Please note that the Hempstead County Farmers’ Market has since been renamed the Hope Farmers’ Market and will be referred to as Hope Farmers’ Market throughout this report. The El Dorado Farmers’ Market has utilized cooking demonstration equipment, marketing assistance such as newspaper advertising, signage, and other efforts to increase their customer base and grow the market among the community. Many customers are engaged with the market via Facebook, which has over 1,500 followers who keep up with availability and market activities. The El Dorado Farmers’ Market Board has actively prepared during the last two years for a great new location that is being built in downtown El Dorado. The location will be open in 2017 and be a part of the \$75 million dollar transformation of downtown El Dorado by the nonprofit group, El Dorado Festival & Events. The space will provide two market shelters in a large public greenspace area next to the new amphitheater and adjacent to the new children’s playscape. All marketing efforts like signage, etc will be able to be used for the new location as well. The Hope Farmers Market (HFM) also heavily utilized their cooking demonstration and other equipment. The storage building has been a tremendous help and has allowed the market to become independent and not rely on other nearby businesses for storage space. The storage building stores all of their supplies as well as a refrigerator, so that vendors can sell their eggs from market and still abide by new state regulations of keeping them in a running refrigerator. The HFM also sees a large boost in attendance specifically on three special event days: Opening Day, Independence Day Celebration, and National Farmers’ Market Week.

b. Impact on Community: Both markets have had tremendous and positive impact on their communities. The El Dorado Farmers’ Market (EDFM) is the only one in the Union County and has provided the community access to locally produced products in a central location of town. Since the opening of the EDFM in 2014, the Wednesday and Saturday morning markets have become a destination for dedicated customers as well as new visitors. Cooking demonstrations have provided community education on how to cook fruits and vegetables, maintain healthier diets, and gear diets and menu’s toward locally grown food. Vendors developed deep personal relationships with their customers, sharing information with them on how the food is grown, how to prepare it, and what is

coming to market next. The new EDFM Board was developed in 2014 and created bylaws and an application process, only allowing locally grown food and locally produced items at the market. New vendors go through a site inspection before being approved. The active marketing campaign and social media efforts have kept the community very involved with the market since opening. The Hope Farmers Market has involved the Cooperative Extension Service, who carries out cooking demonstrations as well as providing recipes to customers. The community is much more aware of the HFM and has become more involved and participatory as the HFM has just completed the 4th season.

- ii. Goal/Objective 2: Market Manager Training. Goal #1: Expose managers to new possibilities and ideas to implement at market. Goal #2: Connect market manager to network of market managers and other resources.
 - a. Progress Made: A Market Manager Training was held on March 10, 2015, in Hope, AR that consisted of a six-hour track for market managers and had 29 market managers in attendance from across the state of Arkansas. This event was publicized across the state through flyers, email listservs, social media, public service announcements, and radio. Many of the managers in attendance were managing smaller markets or markets that were just opening. They were extremely open to new ideas and yearning to hear about how to improve their markets. The training included experienced speakers on topics including: Managing Your Market, Grant Writing (which included a segment on EBT and grant funds available in Arkansas for equipment), Activities at Market, State Legislation (a copy of the AR Cottage Industry Law was provided), SNAP Program, and Web/Online Tools: Facebook, Pinterest, Email Newsletters. A networking luncheon was included and laid the foundation for greater communication and sharing information among market managers as well as the experienced speakers. Many managers made connections with market managers who could act as mentors in upcoming years, especially to those markets that were just developing. Several handouts, online resources, and speaker's contact information were provided in the training packets.
 - b. Impact on Community: Thousands of community members and consumers will benefit from the knowledge learned by the 29 market managers from across the state. Through a follow-up survey one-year after the training, 100% of managers reported that the training helped improve the profitability of vendors at market this year, so many beginning markets do not make it past their first few years. This training covered such a wide variety of topics that ensured that managers have a great working knowledge of markets and state regulations but also a great knowledge of ways to ensure market success. This knowledge includes in-depth information of advertising via social media, attracting and retaining customers, hosting activities to engage the community, grant writing to expand market facilities, utilizing the SNAP program, and other ways that will all benefit not only the community but the vendors of the market. Volunteers and other professionals who provide technical assistance to growing markets were also in attendance and took the knowledge back to the markets they assisted.

iii. Goal/Objective 3: Farmers' Market Vendor Training. Goal #1: Educate farmers on topics that will improve profitability, sales, and customer loyalty at markets.

a. Progress Made: A Farmers' Market Vendor Training was also held on March 10, 2015, in Hope, AR in conjunction with the manager workshop. The training consisted of a six-hour track for market vendors and attracted 38 farmers and vendors statewide and also from East Texas. The vendor training was advertising in conjunction with the manager training. Many of the vendors in attendance had been growing for some time but had serious struggles and lack of knowledge with how to market their products well, how to price their products, how to track profitability at market, and how to develop great customer relationships. The six-hour track covered the following topics: Post-Harvest Handling, Food Safety, Marketing and Profitability in Farming, Beautifying Market Display & Increasing Sales at Market – Part 1 & 2, Branding, and State Legislation (a copy of the AR Cottage Industry Law was provided).

b. Impact on Community: Vendors left the training with knowledge and tools to greatly enhance their market success. Learning proper post-harvest handling results in more fresh produce sold at market, and more produce lasting longer for consumers. Learning better marketing skills, from simple things like table arrangement, and enhancing vendor booths with farm signage, product signage, and table display will help the vendors increase customers, sales, and profitability. Learning how to price food and products will directly influence the overall profitability at market and allow vendors to not only make a profit but grow their businesses and thrive, hopefully moving into more markets in the future. Food safety education is of huge importance to food vendors and the in-depth presentation by Dr. Seideman increased food safety for the communities who purchase food from the vendors at markets statewide. Perhaps one of the most important topics that vendors lacked knowledge in was customer education and customer engagement. Customer retention is hard at markets, especially vendors with competitive food prices, so engaging and retaining customers is crucial for vendor success. Vendors learned how to create customer loyalty by developing customer newsletters and enhancing their customer education. One reason vendors leave markets or quit farming is lack of profit, so recordkeeping was covered in great depth to ensure market farming success so the markets can thrive and grow for the community for years to come. Almost a year after the training, follow-up evaluations were sent to participants. Out of 38 participants, 17 were received back. 47% improved profitability, 88% improved decision-making and business managements skills, eight participants entered new markets and 41% increased their income. The vendors had a very challenging growing season the following year with 3 months of too much rain followed by 3 months of no rainfall at all. Though their knowledge increased, their production decreased, therefore decreasing profits and income.

2. Quantify the overall impact of the project on the intended beneficiaries, if applicable, from the baseline date (the start of the award performance period, September 30, 2014). Include further explanation if necessary.

i. Number of direct jobs created: 1

One participant of the vendor training has created a new urban farm and composting business that he manages full-time.

- ii. Number of jobs retained: 8
Training participants reported that 4 vendors sell at market as a full-time job. Two vendors at EDFM retained full-time market selling jobs. Two market managers who attended the training have retained their paid market manager position.
- iii. Number of indirect jobs created:
- iv. Number of markets expanded: 8
Eight market managers who attended the training reported market growth after the training in their follow-up surveys.
- v. Number of new markets established: 1
One market manager who attended the training reported a new market start. Four additional market managers who attended the training are still using the knowledge learned to get their markets started and all reported they expect to begin in 1-3 years.
- vi. Market sales increased by \$thousands of dollars and increased by 37%.
Vendors of the market training reported an increase of 37% in sales the year after attending the training. Participants and market vendors did not share sales by dollar amounts, only percentages.
- vii. Number of farmers/producers that have benefited from the project: 275
The project benefited 275 farmers throughout the life of the project: 35 through the Hope Farmers' Market, 15 through the El Dorado Farmers' Market. This number also includes the 214 vendors that sell at the nine markets that market managers attended the training from and 11 additional vendors who attended the training from markets that were not ones the market managers attended from.
 - a. Percent Increase: Since we do not have statistics on every one of the 275 producers and when they joined each market, this percentage cannot be calculated.

3. Did you expand your customer base by reaching new populations such as new ethnic groups, additional low income/low access populations, new businesses, etc.? If so, how?

Low income populations were reached by those markets whose market managers attended the SNAP/EBT program training at the market manager workshop and implemented that the following year at their markets. The El Dorado Farmers' Market reached a wide variety of customers, including many minorities and ethnic groups, by increasing vendors who sold a variety of products. For example, one new vendor is Chinese, and though she does not speak English, she transports her unique products to market by motorbike and sets up a great display of quality vegetables that cannot be found in the area. Examples of her produce include Chinese cabbages, water spinach, Asian melons and squashes. Another example is a new young farmer who sold fresh organic ginger and turmeric that attracted many Asian customers. Many vendors at EDFM also sold turnip greens, collards, cabbages, tomatoes, and other traditional vegetables at reasonable prices that attracted low income customers to attend the market. Crop varieties

available were advertised in the newspaper on a weekly basis. The Hope Farmers' Market also reached new ethnic populations. The Cooperative Extension Service made connections between the market and several Hispanic restaurants in the area. Cooking demos led by these chefs brought out the Hispanic population and the market also saw an increase in WIC participants making purchases at the market.

4. Discuss your community partnerships.

- i. Who are your community partners? (parts i, ii, and iii are all answered below – by partner organization)
- ii. How have they contributed to the overall results of the FMPP project?
- iii. How will they continue to contribute to your project's future activities, beyond the performance period of this FMPP grant?

As an outreach effort, EDFM and HFM built new relationships with local and statewide organizations and nonprofits to expand reach of the markets and community food projects. These partnerships expanded the reach of the project and increased the capacity and outreach efforts made possible by the FMPP award:

University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension provides support to farmers' market vendors and managers throughout the state. Each county has an Extension Agent; the two extension departments in Hempstead County and Union County have been instrumental in providing support for the two farmers markets in those counties. Beyond the two markets, Cooperative Extension staff Dr. Seideman shared his incredible wealth of knowledge for market vendors on food safety at the training. Extension continues to support local farmers market and the vendors that comprise them.

Arkansas Agriculture Department provided support to all Arkansas Farmers Markets through the Arkansas Grown website and branding opportunity. Producers can list products on the site at no charge and also use the local 'Arkansas Grown' brand. The AAD also provided valuable training at the Market Manager and Vendor Training as Zachary Taylor, Director of Marketing, presented several sessions to both market managers and market vendors on state legislation surrounding farmers' markets and local food sales. The AAD continues to support market farmers through their branding opportunities, trainings and other networking opportunities.

Arkansas Department of Human Services provided valuable training at the Market Manager and Vendor Training on the SNAP program. Michele Rodgers delivered the presentation and market managers learned about the benefits of incorporating SNAP into their markets, how to acquire proper equipment, grant funding to pay for the equipment so markets can afford the SNAP machines, and handouts on the process to share with others. Michele Rodgers also made herself available to assist managers and vendors after the workshop and throughout the year to get them set up to accept SNAP funds. Jackie Stubblefield from ADHS also educated market managers during a session on grant writing, outlining the grant writing process, what opportunities are available for markets, and where to search and apply for them.

Arkansas Women's Business Center (AWBC) of Winrock International helped plan and facilitate the Market Vendor and Manager trainings, procure market supplies for the

two markets, and handle invoicing for advertising needs for the two markets. The AWBC also provided free one-on-one counseling services to men and women who attended the vendor training to assist with sales, profitability, and other vendor needs. The Director of the AWBC has a background of 8 years of small farming and utilized past experience with farm management to further assist training participants after the training. The Director is still actively working with 2 of the participants on their farm business needs and will continue to serve clients that are current vendors of the two direct farmers markets assisted, any new farmers that join those markets, any market vendors from the training, or any new farmers or market vendors across the state of Arkansas who seek assistance from AWBC.

Hempstead County Master Gardeners provided support and education for Hope Farmers' Market. The master gardeners set up a booth at special events, providing different educational components each time. These have included children's projects and collecting and educating customers about soil samples for home gardens. In 2016 the HFM became a sanctioned Hempstead County Master Gardener event. Volunteers came to market weekly and assisted in volunteer roles such as vendor management and assistance. HFM plans to solicit assistance from the master gardeners again in the future years.

El Dorado Festival & Events has been instrumental in helping the El Dorado Farmers' Market a new market location to move into in 2017. The nonprofit is spending \$75 million dollars to build a new entertainment facility in the small town. The market manager convinced the nonprofit to allow the concessions shelter to double as a Farmers Market location when not in use, as it will only be used for concessions 5-10 evenings a year. The market manager met with architects around the U.S. who were working on the project to share market design needs, which were taken into consideration and the plan was modified to include a great market space. The space will be available for market use at no charge and this market space will continue to serve the El Dorado Farmers' Market past the life of this grant.

5. Are you using contractors to conduct the work? If so, how did their work contribute to the results of the FMPP project?

Regina Walker, of New Direction Consulting LLC., worked with the Hempstead County Farmers' Market and the El Dorado Farmers' Market to implement marketing plans and purchase of supplies requested. She also facilitated the coordination, promotion, and implementation of the two training programs for market managers and market vendors.

6. Have you publicized any results yet?* No
- i. If yes, how did you publicize the results?
 - ii. To whom did you publicize the results?
 - iii. How many stakeholders (i.e. people, entities) did you reach?

*Send any publicity information (brochures, announcements, newsletters, etc.) electronically along with this report. Non-electronic promotional items should be digitally photographed and emailed with this report (do not send the actual item).

7. Have you collected any feedback from your community and additional stakeholders about your work? Yes.

i. If so, how did you collect the information? From our participants of the Market Vendor and Manager Training, we conducted an evaluation the day of the training in March for a baseline. We then sent out a follow-up survey at the end of the year to analyze how much the training helped the participants, how much sales had increased, how much their skills had increased, how much markets grew, if new markets started up, if vendors joined additional markets, and other information. The two farmers' markets directly assisted with promotional supplies also kept record of verbal suggestions from community members and customers as well as a computer document of all social media feedback.

ii. What feedback was relayed (specific comments)?

Regarding the trainings, here were some specific comments that came from evaluations:

- "Just love that topics were so pertinent to today's farmers," "I liked that this training could benefit both beginners and seasoned farmers," "All presenters were knowledgeable and interesting." --Overall training comments
- "Great branding info," "Excellent speaker," "Very informative and detailed information," "Good, lots of good info on legislation and enjoyed the branding presentations." --Comments on Branding/Marketing and State Legislation
- "Enjoyed hearing his personal experiences with 2 kinds of farming," "Enjoyed the presentation and ideas for new products," "Great job, very useful information." --Comments on Post Harvest Handling and Market Display
- "Wow, Jerica really made me see exactly how much each product really costs to produce," "Liked how you showed the breakdown to figure out costs," "Great info." --Comments on Marketing and Profitability in Farming
- "She gave excellent slides on how to set up the produce at market," "Very interesting examples of what will hinder or increase sales based on her own experiences," "Your displays helped me understand how to best market my product." --Comments on Beautifying Market Display/Increasing Market Sales
- "Wonderful pictures and ideas for promoting a farmers' market," "Loved her practical knowledge and lessons learned," "Made me aware of how valuable this information could be if incorporated into your market activities." --Comments from Activities At Market.
- "Very useful information. Something that we have to know on a daily basis," "He made a boring topic very interesting and user friendly." --Comments from State Legislation
- "We use SNAP but I was not aware of how it worked until I listened to this presentation," "I was happy to find out more about the specifics of the SNAP program." --Comments from SNAP presentation

The farmers market customers of EDFM and HFM have been so impressed with the marketing and advertising efforts for the beginning markets. EDFM customers have shared how helpful the newspaper and social media posts are as well as market banners and signage. They hope to see the market grow and want to see more vendors and more produce offered in the future.

8. Budget Summary:

- i. As part of the FMPP closeout procedures, you are required to submit the SF-425 (Final Federal Financial Report). Check here if you have completed the SF-425 and are submitting it with this report:
- ii. Did the project generate any income? Yes.
 - a. If yes, how much was generated and how was it used to further the objectives of the award? The El Dorado Farmers' Market and the Hempstead County Farmers' Market both collected stall fees on market days. These fees were saved up and will be used for marketing and advertising efforts in the upcoming year. These marketing efforts will be vital to the continued success of these two markets.

9. Lessons Learned:

- i. Summarize any lessons learned. They should draw on positive experiences (e.g. good ideas that improved project efficiency or saved money) and negative experiences (e.g. what did not go well and what needs to be changed).

The training was received with overwhelming response. We had a very high turnout for that area of the state and were impressed by the length to which participants traveled to attend. All responses were positive and 100% of the attendees' evaluations reflected that they would attend more trainings if offered. The use of actual farmers, vendors, and market managers

The farmers' market supplies and storage sheds proved to be a great and very valuable use of FMPP funding. These supplies increased education at the market, awareness of the market, organization of the market, and will continue long after the life of the FMPP award.

Marketing is vital to success, along with the right location for the market. Flyers, newspaper ads, radio support, banners, signage around town, and social media promotion made a huge difference in exposure for EDFM and HFM markets.

- ii. If goals or outcome measures were not achieved, identify and share the lessons learned to help others expedite problem-solving:

Nine farmers' markets were expanded, rather than the projected 30 markets. As Arkansas is such a rural state, this was still a very significant and high number to expand. 30 market managers were in attendance at the workshop as anticipated. However, many markets sent more than one manager or volunteer, so the larger number expected was not reached. 70% of producers reported an increase in profitability. Though when applying for the grant we had anticipated this would be 95%, we did not calculate the challenges of mother nature. The year of the training, it rained for 3 months followed by 3 months of drought. It was one of the hardest growing years in a decade, so to see that 70% still increased profitability was a great accomplishment. Of the projected 50 farmers that would be served in training activities, the number turned out slightly lower, at 39 farmers. Though the number was slightly lower, 86% reported that the Arkansas Farmers Market Vendor Training improved their decision making and

business-management skills and 100% of all participants reported that they would participate in another training like this if offered.

- iii. Describe any lessons learned in the administration of the project that might be helpful for others who would want to implement a similar project:

For farmer/vendor trainings, the use of actual farmers/vendors and actual managers was received very highly. The professionals were also a nice mix for regulations and grant information, but those experienced vendors received phenomenal ratings by participants and are highly recommended when other markets are designing future trainings.

10. Future Work:

- i. How will you continue the work of this project beyond the performance period? In other words, how will you parlay the results of your project's work to benefit future community goals and initiatives? Include information about community impact and outreach, anticipated increases in markets and/or sales, estimated number of jobs retained/created, and any other information you'd like to share about the future of your project.

Several small training programs designed by individual farmers' markets have been developed after the initial March 2015 training. Although they are shorter and draw from regional rather than statewide speakers, these have proved beneficial for markets and vendors. The Hope Farmers' Market has created an educational opportunity out of their annual vendor meeting, and over 100 vendors and community members were in attendance in 2016. The two markets specifically helped will continue to grow in vendor size, vendor profitability, and community interaction and awareness. The markets will use the supplies to conduct cooking demonstrations will continue to attract wide audiences and new customers, educate existing customers, and help develop the markets as community events.

- ii. Do you have any recommendations for future activities and, if applicable, an outline of next steps or additional research that might advance the project goals?