

**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](mailto: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.

<b>Report Date Range:</b> <i>(e.g. September 30, 20XX-September 29, 20XX)</i>	September 30, 2014 – March 31, 2017
<b>Authorized Representative Name:</b>	Erin Buckwalter
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<b>Recipient Organization Name:</b>	Northeast Organic Farming Association of Vermont
<b>Project Title as Stated on Grant Agreement:</b>	Growing Demand and Strengthening Vermont's Direct-to-Consumer Markets
<b>Grant Agreement Number:</b> <i>(e.g. 14-FMPPX-XX-XXXX)</i>	14-FMPPX-VT-0169
<b>Year Grant was Awarded:</b>	2014
<b>Project City/State:</b>	Richmond, VT
<b>Total Awarded Budget:</b>	\$92,362

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: Grow consumer demand for local agricultural products purchased through direct-to-consumer markets.

a. Progress Made:

-NOFA-VT’s Farm to Community Mentors conducted a total of 139 face-to-face outreach events in their regions of the state in order to increase consumer knowledge about direct market opportunities. These events ranged from presenting on panels; attending community events such as family festivals, community meals and tractor days; providing information at summer meal sites, laundromats, rabies clinics, hunger councils; and being interviewed for community TV. For these events, we developed a [Buy Direct brochure](#) with information and resources about accessing direct markets in Vermont that participants could take home with them.

-We conducted research to provide consumers with pricing information to address perceived price barriers between direct markets and grocery stores. The results of this 2016 research were published in March 2017 as our 2016 Direct Market Pricing Study [Overview](#) and [Full Report](#).

-We organized on-farm experiences to engage consumers in direct markets. These experiences included Open Farm Week 2015 and 2016 – promoting a week’s worth of activities at farms and farmers markets around the state where consumers could meet local farmers, and learn more about where their food comes from and how it is produced. We also hosted 15 Socials on direct market farms around the state where social attendees shared a meal featuring the host farm’s products, learned about their direct marketing opportunities, and took a tour of the farm. Lastly, we partnered with the Vermont Agency of Agriculture to organize a Buy Local Market on the Statehouse Lawn in August 2015 and 2016 to celebrate National Farmers Market Week.

b. Impact on Community:

-Over 8,700 people were reached through our face-to-face outreach events they and increased their knowledge about direct market opportunities. Many of these people learned about opportunities for limited-income Vermonters to access local and organic foods through using their SNAP benefits at farmers markets and other food access programs. From 2014 to 2016, we saw EBT sales at farmers markets grow from \$66,902 to \$74,420 or 11.2%. In addition, we saw the number of CSA shares by farms reporting consistently on the annual CSA surveys over the course of the project increase from 2,491 in 2013 to 3,105 in 2015, or 24.6%. We attribute the growth in these numbers as an important outcome of the outreach made possible through this grant.

-For the first time, Vermont has a pricing study that compares all direct market channels (farmers markets, CSAs and farm stands) to grocery stores. Data was collected from 14 farms, an average of 10 farmers markets, and seven grocery stores from a wide geographic spread around the state. In addition, this report represented the seasonal variability as data from June, July, August and

September were included. In the past, we only had pricing comparison information for farmers markets and the previous studies represented limited time-frames (one week or one-two months), not many months.

-In 2015, 80 farms and farmers markets hosted events for Open Farm Week. Eighty-seven percent said it was helpful in attracting new customers, 67% said it was helpful to increasing their sales, and 91% said it was helpful to educating consumers about farms and food. In 2016, 97 farms and farmers markets participated in Open Farm Week, with more than 2,839 visitors (41 participating sites responded to the survey). Seventy-two percent of participating farms and markets that reported said it was helpful for attracting new customers/visitors; 50% said it was helpful for increasing sales, and 49% said it was helpful for increasing profits. 100% wanted Open Farm Week to happen again next year.

-In 2015, approximately 400 folks attended the socials held on direct market farms. In 2016, 483 people attended the socials.

ii. Goal/Objective 2: Increase the knowledge and professionalism of farmers selling to direct-to-consumer markets to grow and/or strengthen their businesses.

a. Progress Made:

-We conducted annual surveys of farmers markets and CSAs, and created [reports](#). In addition, we worked with the Agency of Agriculture to begin data collection for farm stands.

-We developed and shared resources about rural enterprises. These were published as two guides: '[Understanding Land Use Regulations for Farm Businesses](#),' '[Supporting and Managing Rural Enterprises for Municipalities](#),' as well as case studies of two different farm-rural enterprise businesses - [Bread & Butter Farm Case Study](#) and [Fat Toad Farm Case Study](#).

-We held a total of 35 workshops on direct market topics, each identified from needs articulated on the annual farmer and farmers market surveys, as well as from farmer feedback.

-We developed a direct market mentorship program, providing direct market mentorship opportunities to eight market organizers and 15 farmers.

b. Impact on Community:

-The rural enterprise resources were very well received. We heard from a number of municipalities that these resources were very timely and that they were going to share them with others in their town planning community.

-We had 644 attendees at the 35 direct market workshops. On average, 96% of the attendees responding to surveys about the quality of the workshops rated the workshops excellent or good/fair. At the farmers markets conferences, 97.5% of respondents stated they learned new techniques that they will use at their markets.

-Farmers markets and farms receiving mentorships were able to learn from their peers. Some of the topics they focused on were: farmers market organization strategies, assessing the profitability of each direct market channel the farm was selling into, effective marketing of CSA shares, working with some start-up/early stage farms on their marketing strategies, and best practices for record-keeping systems to track direct market sales (farms) and overall market gross sales (farmers markets).

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: Not applicable
  - ii. Number of jobs retained: Not applicable
  - iii. Number of indirect jobs created: Not applicable
  - iv. Number of markets expanded: Not applicable
  - v. Number of new markets established: Not applicable
  - vi. Farmers Market sales increased by \$305,256 and increased by 6.1%.  
CSA share sales increased by \$229,081 and increased by 22.8%.  
-Note: While we had over 40 farmers markets reporting to the annual surveys, only 18 of them responded to each survey during the grant. Similarly, while we had over 50 CSA farms reporting to the annual surveys, only 19 of them responded to each survey during the grant.
  - vii. Number of farmers/producers that have benefited from the project: 644 farmers and market leaders attended our workshops. 177 farms and farmers markets participated in Open Farm Week. Eleven farms hosted Socials. Eight market leaders and 15 farmers received mentorships. Note: some individuals may be counted twice (e.g. participated in Open Farm Week both 2015 and 2016 or attended more than one workshop).
    - a. Percent Increase: Not applicable
  
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?
 

-Yes, a primary way that we expanded our customer base by reaching new populations was through our face-to-face direct market outreach events. Over 8,700 people were reached through these events. We also reached thousands of people through Open Farm Week events and direct market socials. Events focused on increasing customer knowledge about direct market opportunities and access-resources for low-income populations (e.g. sharing information about the farmers markets in the state that accept EBT cards).
  
4. Discuss your community partnerships.
  - i. Who are your community partners?
    - The Vermont Agency of Agriculture
    - The Vermont Natural Resources Council
    - Shelburne Farms
    - The Farm-Based Education Network
    - Vermont Farmers Market Association
    - Community groups such as organizers of community suppers and libraries
    - partners in Open Farm Week were the Vermont Department of Tourism and Marketing, Vermont Fresh Network, Farm Based Education Network, City Market, Shelburne Farms, the Vermont Farm to Plate Network Agritourism Task Force, and UVM Extension.
  - ii. How have they contributed to the overall results of the FMPP project?
    - Vermont Farmers Market Association – partnered on data collection, promotions for farmers markets
    - VT Agency of Agriculture – partnered on data collection, supported the creation and dissemination of the rural enterprise documents, partnered on the direct market pricing study, and administered the farm stand survey in 2015 and 2016.
    - VT Natural Resources Council – partnered on the creation and dissemination of the rural enterprise documents.

- Shelburne Farms and the Farm-Based Education Network - partnered on the creation and dissemination of the rural enterprise documents. They also partnered on Open Farm Week planning and promotions.
  - Community groups such as organizers of community suppers and libraries provided places for our farm to community mentors to conduct outreach to consumers about direct markets and food access.
  - Other partners in Open Farm Week supported the planning and promotions of Open Farm Week.
  - Each partner organization brought their unique skills and perspectives that lead to comprehensive resources and/or outreach.
- iii. How will they continue to contribute to your project's future activities, beyond the performance period of this FMPP grant?
- Vermont Farmers Market Association – will continue to support promotions for farmers markets
  - Vermont Agency of Agriculture – will continue to partner on the farm stand surveys and data collection from farmers markets.
  - VT Natural Resources Council – will support the sharing of the rural enterprise documents with the Vermont Planners community
  - Shelburne Farms and the Farm Based Education Network – will continue planning and promoting Open Farm Week 2017 and beyond
  - community groups such as organizers of community suppers and libraries – will continue to provide places for our farm to community mentors to conduct outreach to consumers about direct markets and food access.
  - other partners in Open Farm Week will continue planning and conducting outreach for the 2017 week.
5. Are you using contractors to conduct the work? If so, how did their work contribute to the results of the FMPP project?
- The NOFA-VT Farm to Community Mentors are located all around the state. Because they are embedded in the communities where they live, they were able to attend many community events to promote direct markets.
  - Workshop presenters – they bring their specific expertise on direct market subjects to share with our workshop attendees.
  - Graphic designer –made the rural enterprise resources and pricing study visually appealing.
  - For the mentorships, we matched direct market farmers and market organizers with mentors who are providing their expertise to the mentees.
6. Have you publicized any results yet?\*
- i. If yes, how did you publicize the results?
    - We publicized the results on our website, via our monthly email newsletter (approximately 9,800 subscribers) and our quarterly mailed newsletter, by mailing resources to partners, and by distributing at regional and statewide meetings. The rural enterprise resources were also the focus of a workshop at our 2016 NOFA-VT Winter Conference.
  - ii. To whom did you publicize the results? We publicized the results of the rural enterprise resources to farmers and over 200 municipal contacts in every community across the state (zoning administrators, select boards, etc.). We publicized the results of the pricing study to all our members and e-newsletter subscribers, to producers and farmers

market organizers, and to consumers and service providers working with consumers (e.g. Community Action Agencies and food shelves). We publicize the results of the annual surveys to producers, farmers market organizers, and state agencies and organizations (e.g. Vermont Agency of Agriculture and the Farm to Plate Network).

iii. How many stakeholders (i.e. people, entities) did you reach? 10,000+

\*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?

i. If so, how did you collect the information?

We collected surveys from workshop attendees and Open Farm Week participating farms and farmers markets. We also received email comments from community members about different aspects of the project (e.g. municipalities emailing to ask about sharing the rural enterprise resources with others in their community).

ii. What feedback was relayed (specific comments)?

-“Great speaker, great crowd, learned a lot, great research”

-“Helpful to have the perspective of someone from outside Vermont”

-“Best talk I’ve been to at the NOFA conference ever! Detailed, clear, organized.”

-“Enjoyable, engaging, interesting.”

-“VERY VERY GOOD!”

-“Just received your ‘rural enterprise’ letter – very nicely presented!”

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?

a. If yes, how much was generated and how was it used to further the objectives of the award?

-Not applicable

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).

-Working with partners to develop comprehensive resources for farmers and municipalities is the way to go. For example, the rural enterprise resources development team included folks with land use planning, regulatory, and farmer service provider backgrounds. The resources were much better for having our collective perspectives develop them.

-Conducting a pricing study that includes CSAs is a huge challenge due to the unique nature of goods sometimes in CSA boxes (e.g. garlic scapes, komatsuna) that can’t be found in grocery stores. In order to compare CSA box prices with a grocery store, you need to try to come up with the cost of a comparable “box” of goods at the grocery store, but when those items are not available at the grocery store, finding a substitute was sometimes a challenge for our study.

-Working with a large group to collaboratively organize and promote Open Farm Week has been a huge benefit to getting the word out. With so many partners, our reach to consumers is so much more than just one organization working alone.

-We have so many farmers and market managers with great skills that we were able to tap into many local presenters in order to stretch our grant funding and allow us to provide more workshops. That said, the perspectives from outside of Vermont were greatly appreciated and we will work hard to bring in more of those in the future.

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

-Not applicable.

- 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:

-While working in partnership leads to better results, it often takes longer and the additional time should be budgeted for adequately.

#### 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.

-We will continue to share the resources/reports we developed.

-We will continue to work with the Agency of Agriculture to refine our direct market producer data collection.

-We will continue to engage consumers on a statewide scale, increasing their knowledge about direct markets. This includes events like our socials and Open Farm Week.

-We will continue to promote relationships/mentorships between farmers and farmers market organizers.

- 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?

-We need more information about consumers understanding and preferences in relation to direct markets so we can plan a large-scale direct markets marketing campaign. This will take focus groups and marketing expertise.

-We need to relook at the data we're collecting on direct markets statewide and revamp our surveys so we can make the reports as useful as possible for producers and market organizers. In addition, we would like to develop resources that help farmers and market organizers better use their own data to make business and marketing decisions to grow/support their direct markets.