

FY 2014

\$79,193 to Vital Communities, Inc., Junction, VT, to increase direct sales for Upper Valley producers through consumer education and community collaborations.

Final Report

**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:	September 30, 2014-September 30, 2016
Authorized Representative Name:	Beth Roy
Authorized Representative Phone:	802.291.9100x105
Authorized Representative Email:	Beth@VitalCommunities.org
Recipient Organization Name:	Vital Communities
Project Title as Stated on Grant Agreement:	Regional Marketing and Education to Increase Direct Sales in the Upper Valley
Grant Agreement Number: <i>(e.g. 14-FMPPX-XX-XXXX)</i>	14-FMPPX-VT-0170
Year Grant was Awarded:	2014
Project City/State:	White River Junction, VT
Total Awarded Budget:	\$ 79,193

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.**

Project Goal: Vital Communities will expand direct sales for Upper Valley producers by enhancing and expanding our consumer education and Buy Local promotion.

Planned Activity (Sub-Goal) #1: Design and launch a coordinated, modernized Buy Local campaign to increase direct sales volume of our region’s farms.

Progress Made:

We launched our buy local campaign, named Valley Farm Fresh, in summer 2015. Campaign activities promoted direct sales venues in the Upper Valley including farmers’ markets, farm stands, CSA, pick your own, and other opportunities.

Using a marketing and graphic design consultant team, we designed the buy local campaign for our 69-town region of Vermont and New Hampshire (“the Upper Valley”) in winter/spring 2014-15. We chose two Vermont consumer profiles developed by the Vermont Farm to Plate Network to target for our region: families with school-age children and men who cook. Our marketing consultants analyzed consumer data, and we held focus groups to gather feedback on what types of messages and images resonated with our target profiles. We also relied heavily on our previous consumer research from our 2014 Upper Valley Food System Assessment. The marketing and graphic design team produced a campaign strategy, a name, and graphic material templates.

The campaign strategy developed by the marketing team included many potential components to pursue, from social media strategies, to print advertising, to seasonal promotions events, and more. Over the 18 months since campaign launch we have implemented many components of the campaign strategy. The ongoing call to action for the campaign is for consumers to visit ValleyFarmFresh.org, where we encourage direct purchases through updated seasonal information about where to find local foods direct from the farm, and how to prepare them (see Sub-Goal #3). Our ongoing marketing included a weekly advertisement in the Valley News, our area’s largest daily paper (52 weeks); fliers, posters, rack cards, recipe cards, and other printed promotional material used at events and available to partners; we increased our social media presence on Facebook and started an Instagram account.

Four seasonal events to highlight local producers and increase farm income included: a winter farmers’ market promotional event in December 2015, our annual Flavors of the Valley local foods expo in Spring 2016, a summer farmers’ market Love Your Farmer Scavenger in August 2016, and three local food tastings at farm stands and a festival in September 2016. Vital Communities coordinated a promotional raffle at ten winter farmers’ markets in December 2015, providing volunteers, coordinating children’s activities, providing raffle prizes, and in some cases creating social media pages for the markets. In April 2016 we held our annual Flavors of the Valley local foods expo, promoting it heavily through the campaign, and had the highest attendees of recent years. Flavors of the Valley direct sale farm vendors were heavily promoted. In August 2016 we leveraged Vermont Open Farm Week (August 15-21), and New Hampshire Eat Local Month, with a promotional kit and scavenger hunt for interested farmers’ markets in our area. Vital Communities provided all the materials for a Love Your Farmer Scavenger Hunt, promoted it widely and assisted 11 participating markets to promote to their networks. In September 2016 we did tasting demos of Everyday Chef recipes at two farm stands and at a local producer harvest festival.

Impact on Community:

We held events in collaboration with eight winter farmers' markets and 11 summer farmers' markets and two farm stands, hosted 18 direct sale vendors at Flavors of the Valley, and heavily promoted the 176 direct sale farms listed in the Valley Food & Farm Online Guide.

In winter 2015, over 700 people registered for a raffle ticket during our December winter promotional event at eight markets. Over 141 children participated in our summer 2016 Love Your Farmer Scavenger Hunt across 11 markets, which is a good number for our small rural markets. Impact on vendor income from reporting Scavenger Hunt participant markets varied widely. For one market, the Hunt day was the highest agricultural vendor income of the month and triple of the prior year's income; another saw no increase in vendor income; a third saw a bump in sales from the event. We distributed 200 recipe cards and shared more than 350 food samples at three September 2016 local food promotion tasting events. Our project increased our collaboration with farmers and farmers' markets in the region; improved our materials and techniques for promoting local foods on farms and in the community; and increased traffic at local markets. These events strengthened the collaboration between markets and Vital Communities and markets themselves.

Impact metrics:

We sought to increase consumer spending at direct sale farm outlets by 5% over the 18-month project. It was difficult to capture data across the entire region and all direct sale outlets for this ambitious reach goal over a short time period; we believe we are on track. As indicators we used the following: Combined sales at the region's three largest farmers' markets and consumer self-reported spending on local foods. Baseline data for the 2013 combined sales at the Hanover NH, Norwich VT, and Lebanon NH farmers markets were \$1,380,000. Income rose in 2015 and then fell in 2016: In 2015, combined sales were \$1,449,378, an increase of 5%; then in 2016 combined sales for summer only were \$1,346,243, a decrease of 2.4% from baseline. Each market reported reduced sales in 2016, and managers speculate that competition among direct sales outlets, additional farmers' markets, and expanded farm stands may be partially the cause. This points to a drawback in this data indicator. The 2017 Agricultural Census will provide definitive data; until that time we continue to seek reliable indicators (see lessons learned). Consumers receiving our newsletter and attending campaign events also were surveyed yearly; unfortunately financial limitations did not allow large scale surveying but our small sampling did show positive trends. In December 2016, we asked newsletter subscribers (n=3000) to answer survey questions, 86 people responded, and of these, 69% reported increasing their household spending on local foods from 2015-16. Twenty-seven percent indicated increasing their spending over 5% from the prior year. In April 2016, 29% of 187 newsletter and event exit survey respondents reported increasing local foods spending by 5% or more from 2014-15. We believe the long-term trend is toward increased local food purchases and that the campaign activities we undertook during this project are playing a role in increasing farm income and participation in the local food system among targeted consumer groups.

Planned Activity (Sub-Goal) #2: Increase the functionality and educational capacity of our Web-based Guide to Upper Valley Farms, using the data as the backbone of our Buy Local campaign. Collaborate with partner Rutland Area Farm and Food Link, to enhance the broader potential for the Guide redesign in the local food movement.

Progress Made:

The Valley Food & Farm Online Guide is a free, region-wide searchable database of farms and farm-related businesses. Consumers can search by product, farm, venue, zip code, state, and more. Farms and farm-related businesses create and update their listings free of charge. The Guide originally was an annual tabloid and has been exclusively web-based since 2010. During the project period we planned to expand the functionality of and farm listings in the Guide, increase the usage of the Guide by effectively

promoting it through our Buy Local campaign, and collaborate with Rutland Area Farm and Food Link if they chose to adopt our online Guide methods.

Vital Communities' FMPP project coincided with a redesign of the entire Vital Communities' website. This synchronicity enabled us to fully examine the Guide and consider changes to update it for today's web users, then implement changes to functionality within the context of an entire site redesign. The new site launched in summer 2015, along with the Valley Farm Fresh campaign. The new site is responsive (able to be viewed on mobile as well as desktop devices), which was an important requirement given that almost half of our website visitors are viewing on mobile devices. The campaign was centered on ValleyFarmFresh.org, an URL which redirected to a dedicated campaign page on the Vital Communities' website, focused on direct sales opportunities for consumers. On the old site, the Guide was a dedicated page which necessitated consumers clicking through to a specific page. In the redesigned website, we placed a Guide search bar on almost every page of the site, intending to make Guide searches easier as it required fewer clicks.

Our project intended to increase the number of direct sales farms using the Guide to list and promote their farm products. At the project outset, in fall 2014, 166 farms listed their products and services in the Guide. USDA Agricultural Census data has 629 direct sales farms responding from a four county area containing the Upper Valley. It seemed like there was room to grow the number of farm listings by promoting the Guide to those who might benefit but were not listed. Using FMPP funding we carried out a thorough renewal process for existing farm listings, removed defunct businesses, created a comprehensive list of potential new business to list, and performed exhaustive outreach via email, phone, and postal mail (which we often find the most effective form of outreach) to encourage new businesses to list their farms.

Our organizational partner, Rutland Area Farm and Food Link, was able to learn from our website and Guide redesign, as they considered whether or not to convert their paper local food guide into a searchable online database.

Impact on Community:

Impact metrics: We increased direct sale farms listed in the Online Guide by 45%; outreach performed during the project culled defunct business listings and resulted in a new baseline of 121 farms in the Guide, to date we have increased to 176 farms.

Our goal was to increase customer retention at CSA farms and farmers' market vendor returning customers as a reflection of successful local farm promotion. We were not able to capture this data in full, not only due to budget limitations but also as most farms do not measure customer retention (see lessons learned section). The Northeast Organic Farming Association of Vermont performs a yearly CSA farm survey in January/February and shared data with us from responding farms in our Vermont service area, which allows us to see trends from 2014-15. In 2014, responding farms reported an average customer retention rate of 58.5%; in 2015, responding farms reported an average customer retention rate of 76%- a 30% growth in this sample set.

Goal/Objective 3: Planned Activity #3: In collaboration with Rutland Area Farm & Food Link, we will add robust educational material to the VFF Guide and ensure that recipes are available at points of sale, both in print and through mobile apps.

Progress Made:

Farmers, consumers, and food system organizations have increasingly identified food preparation skills as an important barrier to increasing local food consumption. Rutland Area Farm and Food Link, (RAFFL) our partner organization, had been using recipes both on line, in print, and cooking demonstrations, as part of their Everyday Chef food education program, to assist consumers in adopting local food

purchasing habits as well as fresh food preparation skills, for multiple years. During this project, RAFFL gave us their back catalog of 185 Everyday Chef blog posts, which include recipes as well as cooking techniques. Using the 185 recipes as a starting point, RAFFL and VC added 29 posts to the Everyday Chef blog during the project time span. Sample blog topics included: Quick Kimchi, Curried Apple Squash Soup, Easy Berry Cobbler, Slow Cooker Chicken Masala, and Sausage Bean Stew. Our goal had been to link recipe ingredients to food searches on the Valley Food & Farm Guide, such that a consumer searching for pick your own blueberries would find blueberry recipes on the search results page along with the pick your own farms. This one-to-one match proved too difficult to achieve in the programming limitations of our website. Instead, we added a general link and image of the recipe pages automatically to every search result. We have used the recipe database frequently during the campaign events and outreach mentioned above, as well as other local farm promotion activities funded by the Vermont Community Foundation and the New Hampshire Specialty Crop Block Grant.

Additionally, we created a method for farmers to search and access the recipe database and encouraged them to use recipes for their own farm promotions.

Budget changes between proposal and award did not allow for materials printing as originally planned; however, we have been able to print recipes for outreach using other funding sources, and they are always the most desired material by both farms and consumers.

Impact on Community:

The recipe posts have been one of the most popular sections of our website over the past year.

Additionally, having this resource allowed us to demonstrate, provide taste tests, and support farms with recipe cards in both this project and others over the past 18 months.

Impact metric: of direct-market consumers who report increasing their local food consumption, success will mean that 30% report food education from Vital Communities as an 'important factor in yearly surveys. We surveyed consumers at events and via our newsletters in April 2016 and December 2016. Over 40% of respondents (n=185) in April reported that various forms of Vital Communities food education was 'important;' in December, responses varied more widely depending on the type of food education (event, recipe blog) but by and large was also around 40%.

We estimate over 5,000 page views on recipe blog pages, ranging from 300-150 hits per month during the project period. We had 51,505 unique visitors to the Valley Food & Farm Online Guide during the project period.

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:**
- ii. **Number of jobs retained:**
- iii. **Number of indirect jobs created: >24**
 - a. Number of new direct-sale farms founded during project period: 10 (our goal was 8 new farm operators)

b. Number of new on-farm jobs: >14 (it was not possible to formally survey farmers due to survey fatigue in the target audience, so we are reporting based on conversations with beneficiaries)

- iv. **Number of markets expanded:** 4 farmers' markets increased the number of agricultural vendors, to our knowledge
- v. **Number of new markets established:** 3 farmers' markets are establishing or re-establishing
- vi. **Market sales increased by \$69,378 and increased by 5% from baseline in 2014-15; Market sales then decreased by \$103,135 and 2.4 % from baseline in 2016.**

This data is the combined sales of our three largest farmers markets, which consistently track sales data. Smaller markets do not consistently track data and/or are unable to report regularly upon sales. See discussion of this data point in Goal #1.

- vii. **Number of farmers/producers that have benefited from the project:** approximately 176

These beneficiaries include the following breakdown of specific, quantifiable producers affected by the project:

Producers listed in the Valley Food & Farm Online Guide: 176 (all project beneficiaries are listed in the Guide and are a subset of this total number)

Producer vendors at Flavors of the Valley 2016: 18

Producer vendors at three largest farmers' markets: approximately 75 (numbers vary yearly; counting the variable producer vendors at all smaller markets would likely increase number to 100)

Farm stands hosting a food sample tasting event: 2

a. Percent Increase: 45%. This number refers to the increase in active farms listed in the Valley Food & Farm Online Guide.

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?

As an intermediary organization, we reached new farmers' markets and new farm businesses with our outreach. We provided activities, collaborative opportunities, marketing materials, and events for market managers to promote their markets and attract new consumers. We reached out to 400 farm businesses to join the Valley Food & Farm Guide, 54 new farms signed up and are now engaging with our programming.

4. Discuss your community partnerships.

a. Who are your community partners?

Upper Valley Farmers' market managers are significant community partners in reaching new producers and expanding consumer sales for direct farms. Twelve markets managers joined collaborative marketing projects intended to increase consumer traffic and sales at the markets (These managers represent eight summer markets and 11 winter markets).

b. How have they contributed to the overall results of the FMPP project?

Area market managers are eager to participate in planning, execution, and evaluation of regional local food system marketing to benefit their vendors. Our two market-based campaign events were successful due to manager input and of course participation. Managers attended meetings, gave materials feedback, coordinated and hosted volunteers, and provided evaluation.

c. How will they continue to contribute to your project's future activities, beyond the performance period of this FMPP grant? Market managers are eager to continue collaboration with Vital Communities and one another, through yearly meetings, shared projects, shared

marketing activities. Please see Future Activities section for more details about pending and planned collaborative campaign projects.

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

We contracted with a marketing and design team, Good Egg and Sirius Design, and with a sister food system support organization based in Rutland, VT, Rutland Area Farm and Food Link. Good Egg and Sirius Design contracted with us from January-June 2015, to develop a buy local campaign strategy, and the graphic materials to accompany it. They were a new contractor: our proposal suggested Vital Communities' long-time graphic design firm, but we received advice that a firm with extensive food system experience would better serve the project and issued an RFP for contractors. The campaign strategy provided a blueprint for Vital Communities to increase the profile of direct sales venues through events, media, and targeting certain consumers. The strategy suggested seasonal approaches, building attention for local foods with collaborative events, and using print and social media to promote the Valley Farm Fresh events and website resources. The graphic design provided a unified, updated look for our materials which reflected the positive message of fresh, local food direct from farms. We used the campaign strategy and the graphic materials throughout the campaign. Rutland Area Farm and Food Link (RAFFL) was under contract but played a role of a major collaborator. RAFFL generously shared their entire catalog of recipe blogs from their Everyday Chef project at the outset of the project. They then shared their best practices on local food blogging and created nine new recipe blogs over the project timespan, on the following topics: Orange Rhubarb Sauce; Berries: Delicious, Versatile, and In Season Now; Herbs: 5 Different Ways to Bring on the Fresh; Meat: Oven Braising; Simple Ideas for Preserving your Food; Five Ways to Stretch Your Local Food Dollar; Holiday= Local +Healthy; Holiday Appetizer: Squash Dip; Healthy Lunchbox Tips. Vital Communities simultaneously created and shared 21 new recipe blogs with RAFFL during the project period. As mentioned above, adding food preparation assets to our web-based resources has expanded our ability to promote local farm direct sales and is the most popular campaign asset from a farmer standpoint.

6. Have you publicized any results yet?* Yes.

a. If yes, how did you publicize the results?

b. To whom did you publicize the results?

We have been verbally sharing our project results, process, and lessons learned with colleagues in the Vermont Farm to Plate Network, particularly in the Consumer Education and Marketing Working Group. The Working Group, of which one of our staff is Co-Chair, is developing and launching a grassroots local food campaign for the state. We have verbally shared our ongoing results in order to assist the Working Group project development.

c. How many stakeholders (i.e. people, entities) did you reach? Approximately 20 entities
***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).** We are attaching promotional materials developed to promote the Valley Farm Fresh campaign and local direct sale farms.

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

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

Feedback was collected in the form of event-specific qualitative responses from community partners as well as survey-style feedback from event participants. We also surveyed event attendees and newsletter recipients about the impact of 'food education from Vital Communities' on their local food buying habits, in electronic and paper surveys (see goals).

b. What feedback was relayed (specific comments)?

We evaluated our December 2015 winter farmers' market promotion through quantitative and qualitative data. Comments from the Managers included: "I believe the extra promotion helped us attract more vendors, and made most of them more optimistic about the possibility of more sales. About 75% are returning for our January market. I think our added auction items helped us create some community good will as well. Overall, this helped, but the market was pretty far down in attendance last year, so anything is an improvement, to be honest."

"Please keep doing this, your involvement in the market promotion is invaluable. It would be helpful to build a kit that helps farmers' market managers to promote their market better. Sort of a checklist of things that generally work."

Evaluation of our Flavors of the Valley 2016 Local Foods Tasting Expo included vendor comments such as: "Met people that may not come to the Farmers' Market," "Wanted to increase public awareness of our farm and sell CSA shares. Met first, low yield on 2nd," "[Wanted to] meet face to face with our customers, share some of our new products, promote CSA shares. Yes, we met our goals and expectations."

Evaluation of our Love Your Farmer Scavenger Hunt toolkit during Vermont Open Farm Week and New Hampshire Eat Local Month was less open ended, but when asked if more people came to the market or stayed longer to shop, manager said, "Families stayed longer to investigate the stands," "Great event. Let's do it again next year!" Seven out of eight market manager respondents said the event was successful, in a yes/no question.

Comment by Andrea Rhodes, farmer impacted by multiple campaign events: "It doesn't matter how good a farmer you are if you aren't able to sell your products. One of the barriers that I faced was introducing my cheese to customers - both wholesale and retail. Flavors of the Valley was a great and convenient opportunity for me to introduce my chevre to hundreds of local customers and I made a valuable contact with a wholesale buyer. Also, as part of Vermont Open Farm Week/New Hampshire Eat Local Month, the "Love Your Farmer Scavenger Hunt" brought many families to the local farmers markets I participate in. The children had a passbook of questions to discover at the market and it allowed me to tell them a little bit more about my farm and my cheese. It was a lot of fun for everyone involved!

8. Budget Summary:

a. 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:

b. Did the project generate any income? No

9. Lessons Learned:

a. 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 project allowed us to impact direct farm sales in our region through increasing our marketing support for local farms, to deepen relationships with consumers, farms, and direct sales markets, and to update events, outreach, and methodology in our food system work. As a regionally based food system support organization, we can have the most impact by adding value to existing efforts- whether that be by co-promoting events with farms and sales venues, or by using our community contacts to promote farm-based businesses. Creating a new 'brand' to promote- Valley Farm Fresh- was less successful than promoting the idea of Upper Valley farm fresh food through existing venues and marketing efforts. Our largest successes were in collaborative projects with producers and farmers' markets, particularly event-

based promotions. After receiving the campaign strategy blueprint from our marketing consultant, we attempted to implement every component within the strategy. This exceeded our capacity based on available funding, and we adjusted quickly, focusing on activities which we knew farmers and market managers wished for, and experimenting with outreach methods. Leveraging volunteers not only assisted financially but also built community capacity at markets and engaged partners in our work. We used volunteers for outreach, staffing events, food styling, and data collection.

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

We had ambitious goals for local market growth and for data collection. We believe the Upper Valley is on-trend to hit the 5% growth in local food sales by 2020 (our Vermont Farm to Plate Network shared goal). However, it was ambitious to effect that change within direct sales outlets over an 18-month project, though we believe we have supported significant progress toward the goal. Additionally, we aimed to measure many data sources which in the end were not possible to gather given our budget and the characteristics of farm businesses. Farmer schedules (e.g. they are unavailable in September when the project closed) and survey fatigue are two large barriers to gathering frequent data from Upper Valley producers. We recommend that others engaged in this type of project choose impact metrics and related data sources carefully based on the duration of the project as well as source data, and consider shared data, as we did with NOFA-VT's CSA survey.

Our project was slightly delayed and then impacted by a redesign of the Vital Communities' website which was unanticipated and impacted the new form of the Valley Food & Farm Online Guide. Through analytics analysis, we are concluding that this redesign made it harder for consumers to access the Guide. A lesson learned is to be flexible, but to remember that an update is not necessarily an improvement, and to keep close attention on website analytics.

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

A vital lesson we learned during this project was how to understand and conceptualize 'marketing' from within a non-profit lens. Our role is to promote local agriculture in the region, particularly the direct sales opportunities so coveted by small farmers; for this project we knew we need to renovate our approach to buy local promotion. To that end we hired a marketing and design firm to help us devise a campaign; these contractors were excellent, however, during the project span we have learned more about our role as local food promoters and what is most effective. As mentioned above, our type of organization does best when amplifying existing efforts and convening farm-based businesses to collaborate for business growth. We recommend that other groups looking to implement a similar project interview a range of consultants from various fields, including program evaluation, marketing, campaign organizing, and others which may be relevant, in order to learn which type of consultant will fit the project they are conceiving.

10. Future Work:

- a. 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.**

Many components of the buy local campaign have been successful and will continue to be replicated in coming years by ourselves as well as our community partners. During the project period we attracted additional funding for the buy local campaign focused on specific components, including how to better measure our impact on local food sales, promotion of New Hampshire Specialty Crops, and development of a local foods passport (the Scavenger Hunt was a pilot of this concept). In 2017 & 2018 we will pilot regional Power of Produce Clubs at New Hampshire Farmers' Markets in this area, funded by New Hampshire Specialty Crop Block Grant and Healthy New Hampshire Foundation, using materials and concepts developed during our FMPP project. Our goals include: 250-400 low income children and their families purchase locally grown produce from markets near their homes, overall 600-800 children and their families are reached with POP Club activities over 2 years, and increase overall sales for specialty crop producers on outreach days by 10%. The relationships built during our FMPP project, and the lessons we have learned about effective contemporary outreach and marketing, will be invaluable to this and other projects.

b. 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?

Successful collaboration with and between farmers' market managers during this project is an activity the market managers are eager to continue. Managers wish to share programming ideas, resources, advertising and other promotion costs. They are excited about annual meetings and season collaborations. We hope to secure funding from USDA or other sources to establish a farmers' market Community of Practice which would work on shared projects to increase market success and vendor income.

Our coming project to establish Power of Produce clubs, and other local food promotion work we are undertaking in schools and in market communities, are activities based around the clear need to increase food access and literacy in our region. Nutrition and healthy food preparation education as well as access, are a key need identified by our farmers as well as our region's hospitals, our Upper Valley Hunger Council, and other regional health bodies. We will continue to seek funds for small and large community outreach opportunities based around food literacy and food preparation skills, in support of our local agricultural producers.

As mentioned above, we participate in the Vermont Farm to Plate Network's Consumer Education and Marketing Working Group and its nascent Vermont grassroots local food campaign, currently called 'Rooted in Vermont.' Results from our FMPP project as well as other concurrent marketing projects, and the marketing plan for Rooted in Vermont, show that engaged outreach in traditional and new media channels can be effective in reaching the next local food consumers. We will continue to seek funds for targeted outreach efforts (similar to this project as well as our current New Hampshire Specialty Crop Block Grant focused on outreach in New Hampshire.)



Enjoy

Valley Farm Fresh



Molly Drummond photo

Taste the Valley. Visit a farm. See where your food comes from. Enjoy. Repeat. Eat Valley Farm Fresh.

Local farms, markets, recipes & more—valleyfarmfresh.org



Valley Food & Farm

Working Together for
VITAL COMMUNITIES



Enjoy

Valley Farm Fresh

Taste the Valley. Visit a farm.
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Cook

Valley Farm Fresh

Sausage Bean Stew



Cook

Valley Farm Fresh

Sausage Bean Stew



Cook

Valley Farm Fresh

Sausage Bean Stew



Enjoy this easy one pot meal any time of year!

Adapted from the Food Kitchen Network

- 1 onion, cut into 1/2-inch pieces
- 2 carrots, peeled and finely chopped
- 4 cloves garlic, minced or finely chopped
- 8 ounces dried beans (navy, cannellini, or other except kidney beans)
- 1tsp dried thyme
- 1/2 pound sweet or hot Italian sausage links
- 1 can fire-roasted diced tomatoes (14.5 ounce)
- 3 cups low-sodium chicken broth or stock
- 1/2 cup ditalini or other small pasta
- 2 tablespoons chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley
- 2 teaspoons balsamic vinegar
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
- Grated Parmesan, for serving

Visit ValleyFarmFresh.org for more recipe ideas for cooking with local foods!

Spread the onions over the bottom of a 6-quart slow cooker and top with the carrots, garlic, beans, thyme, and sausage. Mix the diced tomatoes with the broth and 3 cups water and pour over the sausages. Cook on high for 4 to 5 hours or on low for 7 to 8 hours; the beans will be tender.

Uncover the slow cooker and transfer the sausage links to a cutting board. Stir the pasta into the stew and continue to cook, covered, until the pasta is cooked through, about 20 minutes.

Cut the sausages into bite-size pieces and stir into the stew along with the parsley and vinegar. Season with salt and pepper. Serve with grated Parmesan and crusty bread.



Working Together for

VITAL COMMUNITIES

VitalCommunities.org



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- 8 ounces dried beans (navy, cannellini, or other except kidney beans)
- 1tsp dried thyme
- 1/2 pound sweet or hot Italian sausage links
- 1 can fire-roasted diced tomatoes (14.5 ounce)
- 3 cups low-sodium chicken broth or stock
- 1/2 cup ditalini or other small pasta
- 2 tablespoons chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley
- 2 teaspoons balsamic vinegar
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
- Grated Parmesan, for serving

Visit ValleyFarmFresh.org for more recipe ideas for cooking with local foods!

Spread the onions over the bottom of a 6-quart slow cooker and top with the carrots, garlic, beans, thyme, and sausage. Mix the diced tomatoes with the broth and 3 cups water and pour over the sausages. Cook on high for 4 to 5 hours or on low for 7 to 8 hours; the beans will be tender.

Uncover the slow cooker and transfer the sausage links to a cutting board. Stir the pasta into the stew and continue to cook, covered, until the pasta is cooked through, about 20 minutes.

Cut the sausages into bite-size pieces and stir into the stew along with the parsley and vinegar. Season with salt and pepper. Serve with grated Parmesan and crusty bread.



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Enjoy this easy one pot meal any time of year!

Adapted from the Food Kitchen Network

- 1 onion, cut into 1/2-inch pieces
- 2 carrots, peeled and finely chopped
- 4 cloves garlic, minced or finely chopped
- 8 ounces dried beans (navy, cannellini, or other except kidney beans)
- 1tsp dried thyme
- 1/2 pound sweet or hot Italian sausage links
- 1 can fire-roasted diced tomatoes (14.5 ounce)
- 3 cups low-sodium chicken broth or stock
- 1/2 cup ditalini pasta
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Valley
Food & Farm



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August on the Farm

August is [New Hampshire Eat Local Month](#), and [Vermont Open Farm Week](#) is August 15-21. You can help promote farms & fresh foods during these August celebrations. Events across both states provide opportunities for family outings, workplace wellness newsletters, and more. Find schedules and locations in the links above, and share them with your networks.

We hope to see

I Finished the Love Your Farmer Scavenger Hunt!

Please Fill Out The Info Below to Receive Your Prize and Enter the raffle!

Child's Name:

Parent/Guardian's Name:

Parent/Guardian's email:

*We will use this email to inform you if your child has won the grand prize. We will also add your email to our newsletter list so you can be informed of local food, farm and cooking opportunities.

Please do not add me to your mailing list.

Please answer these last questions for us!

How often do you come to this market?

Did the Scavenger Hunt help you learn about farms and local food today?

Any Other Comments? **THANK YOU!**

Find recipes, local food, farms, and more at VitalCommunities.Org!

Welcome to the



Your FARMER

Scavenger

Hunt!

Complete the questions to get a prize today and enter the raffle for a Grand Prize!



Brought to you by
Vital Communities and your
Local Farmers' Market!



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www.VitalCommunities.org

Find the Farmers!

LOVE Your Farmers' Market!

"Hiya!!"

How many farmers are at the market today?
(Be sure and look for all kinds of farms!)



What is one thing you love about this farmers' market?

Ask one farmer what TIME they woke up this morning and write it here:*

What is one reason to shop at the farmers market instead of the grocery store?



*Psssst!!

Try the questions for an extra challenge!

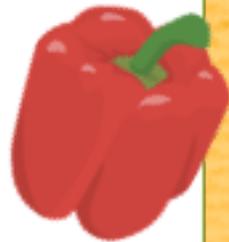
You are done!

Bring your booklet back to the  Hunt table to get your prize and register for the grand prize drawing!

LOVE Your Farmers!

LOVE Farm Stuff!

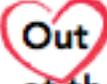
Out of all the farms you found at the market, which one is your favorite? Why?



If a  farmer doesn't look too busy, ask them "What is one thing you love about being a farmer?" and write the answer here.



Pick one farm stand and count how many different things they have for sale. Write the number here:

 Out of all the things you see farmers selling at their booths, which one do you love the most?



LOVE

Fresh Flavors!

LOVE

Plants You Can EAT!

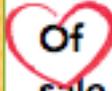
Taste something at a farm booth.
Write or draw what it was here:

What  could you cook or make with it?



Find a leaf you can eat and write
its name here:



Of  all the plants you can eat that are for sale at the market today, which is your favorite? Is it a leaf, a fruit, a root, a stem, or something else? Write what it is and what part of the plant it is from.



enjoy
pick
grill
cook

get
buy
live
eat
find
visit

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Taste the Valley.
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Enjoy. Repeat.
Eat Valley Farm Fresh.



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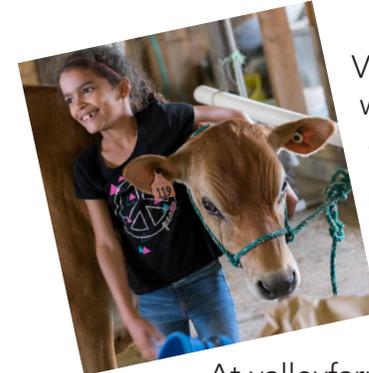
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