

**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, 2015 – February 18, 2018
Authorized Representative Name:	Nancy Staisey
Authorized Representative Phone:	302-567-7141
Authorized Representative Email:	nlstaisey@gmail.com
Recipient Organization Name:	Historic Lewes Farmers Market Society
Project Title as Stated on Grant Agreement:	Creating a Farmers Market Living Lab
Grant Agreement Number: <i>(e.g. 14-FMPPX-XX-XXXX)</i>	15FMPPDE0099
Year Grant was Awarded:	2015
Project City/State:	Lewes, DE
Total Awarded Budget:	\$99,299.99

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.

Goal/Objective 1: Support the Economic Viability of an Expanded Market Season

- **Progress Made:** We conducted 3 workshops aimed at educating farmers that sell at our market and farmers across the Delmarva Peninsula. These workshops focused on ways to make their farms more efficient, marketing more effective, and extend their season.
- **Impact on Community:** The workshops were open any farmers and not just farmers who sell at our market. As a result the impacts extended beyond our market, across the DeMarVa peninsula. A total of 108 farmers attended workshops. The workshops covered the following topics:
 - Market Farmer Productivity Workshop – Ways to increase the efficiency and productivity of small farms, how to expand the growing season to improve income, new tools, methods and practices to increase productivity, and resources available to small farmers (federal, state and nonprofit) were all covered at this workshop.
 - Lean Farming Workshop – Topics covered included applying LEAN approaches to farming, how to improve the productivity of farm operations, how to reduce waste on the farm and increase the profitability of operations.
 - Social Media Workshop – The workshop covered the advantages and disadvantages of different social media platforms, how to use them and on how to present yourself and your farm effectively on social media. The workshop included a hands-on session. One of the areas that we focused on heavily in our first workshop was extending the growing season. We saw sales at our Fall Market increase an average of 18% per market day. We believe that the increase in sales at the fall market was in part due to more products being available at the market. We cover feedback from the workshops under section 8 below.

Goal/Objective 2: Improve Market Access in Underserved Areas

- **Progress Made:** We undertook a variety of activities to address this goal. One of the most significant was opening a new market on Wednesdays located closer to public transportation. We also used several approaches to attempt to attract more SNAP shoppers to both of our markets. We conducted a new outreach campaign. We created a bilingual (Spanish/English) flyer on SNAP acceptance and our SNAP market match program at both of our market locations. We brought our fliers to service agencies and non-profits within a 25 mile radius of our market, state social services, food banks, laundromats, thrift stores, public libraries, senior centers, and elementary schools). We had a market staff person visit various community offices, programs and sites to personally speak with staff about our matching program. We found that many people seem to have trouble believing and understanding that we are actually matching up to \$20 of SNAP dollars at our farmers market. Speaking with people in person helped assuage doubt and clear up confusion about the matching dollar program. We also ran a promotion in conjunction with Kids’ Day - any child whose parent presented an EBT card received free \$5 in tokens (paid for out of non-grant funds) to spend at market with no

EBT purchase necessary. We ran this same promotion for seniors with an EBT card on our Seniors Over 55 Day. This was especially helpful for families and seniors new to the market, because it brought them to the information booth to learn about our matching dollars program.

- **Impact on Community:** Our efforts had a profound impact on the number of SNAP customers and on SNAP dollars issued at the market. By providing bilingual promotional cards, meeting with staff at local social service agencies and community organizations, offering SNAP families a promotion on Kids' Day and Seniors Over 55 Day and opening a new market, we saw strong growth in total SNAP customers, in new SNAP customers, and in SNAP dollars issued. Before we initiated these activities, between 2014-2015, SNAP use increased 2%. In the first year of conducting these activities to attract more customers, we saw year over year growth of 57% in new SNAP customers, growth in total SNAP customers of 24% and growth in SNAP dollars issued of 31%. In 2017 we were able to again add this number of new SNAP customers, despite multiple bad weather market days. It is interesting to note that almost half of our new SNAP customers came from our new Wednesday Market, confirming the effectiveness of our choice of location. The SNAP outreach work we completed helped us quickly distribute information on our acceptance of WIC coupons when this program became available.

Goal/Objective 3: Improve General Awareness and Marketing

- **Progress Made:** As mentioned above, we conducted a new outreach campaign for SNAP recipients to improve awareness, that was very successful. We also evaluated the effectiveness of our marketing channels with the aim of improving our marketing. We have frequently questioned whether our investments in advertising were effective. To test this, we held a free raffle for a donated prize. Anyone could enter the raffle, but if a customer said a "secret phrase" that was shared in our marketing advertisements, they would get two raffle entries. We ran advertisements announcing the raffle in our online channels (including email newsletter and website), as well as in our weekly newspaper ad, but used a different secret phrase for each. We did this to identify where the customer had found out about the raffle and to learn more about which of our marketing strategies reached more customers. To our surprise, we found that far more customers had seen our newspaper ad than our online marketing, by a ratio of 2:1.
- **Impact on Community:** The results show that our efforts under the grant have resulted in a substantial increase in use of SNAP at the market. As well, our awareness and marketing approaches increased both sales and customer visits at our markets. Our evaluation work has helped us fine tune where we make investments in advertising.

Goal/Objective 4: Use the HLFM as a Living Lab: Continuous Learning and Evaluation

- **Progress Made:** We have run 17 experiments with 21 of the farms that sell at the HLFM participating, and 7 special event days. These experiments included: the use data signs on stalls, loyalty reward programs, name tags for farmers, display changes, recipe cards; conducting "meet the farmer" sessions, conducting "Market Pairings" demos at market, use of Special Days to drive attendance and sales at the market, and more.
- **Impact on Community:** Overall, our experiments provided a series of lessons learned regarding what actions and interventions are effective in improving sales and attendance at our farmers market. Our experience and lessons learned are valuable not

only to our market and the farmers/ producers who sell at our market but are also of value to the much broader community of farmers/producers and farmers markets across the country. We have prepared a 47 page booklet, *Creating a Farmers Market Living Lab: Lessons Learned in Growing a Farmers Market*, which summarizes our findings in greater detail than is possible in this report. This is available to read or download from our website <https://www.historiclewesfarmersmarket.org>. We also prepared a PowerPoint presentation on our findings that we can share at meetings and conferences. Below we provide highlights of our findings.

- **Photos on Coolers and Freezers.** Farmers/producers frequently have product for sale that is not on display, typically because it must be kept cold in a cooler. Customers tend to shop with their eyes. Even with detailed signage, customers are less likely to buy a product they can't see immediately. We decided to experiment with adding photos of the product to the exterior of coolers to attract sales. This very simple trick was surprisingly effective -- in our experiment, products sold out over 25% faster than they did without the photos.
- **Recipe Cards.** Given the popularity of recipe cards with sellers, we were surprised that when we conducted experiments on adding recipe cards to market stalls, we did not see consistent increases in sales. Simply placing recipes on a stall didn't have much impact on sales, despite the fact that many customers took the recipes. We then explored whether there were ways to improve the impact of recipe cards on sales. We found approaches that improved the benefit of recipes at market stands included: using recipes to promote unusual or unfamiliar products, and using recipes as an opportunity for customer engagement to sell products. We also found that the impact on sales of offering recipe cards was enhanced when: a) only a few recipes were offered; b) the recipes were simple and easy to prepare; and c) the cards were positioned directly next to the product highlighted.
- **Customer loyalty cards.** We tried two different approaches for customer loyalty cards. In one program the farm stall provided punch cards: customers earned one punch for every \$10 spent, and when they reached \$50 in purchases, they got \$5 credit at that stand. In the other loyalty card program, the farmer initial blocks on a card for every purchasing visit made to their stand. When the card had 5 initialed blocks, the customer's card was entered into a raffle to win a market picnic basket stocked with barbeque items for a group picnic. When we asked the farmers about the impacts of the loyalty cards, both reported that approaches boosted customer loyalty, especially in returning shoppers. However, when we compared changes in sales during the year the loyalty program was in effect to sales during the previous year when there was no loyalty program, we found conflicting results. Sales went up 39% year to year in one case and went down 12% in the other. Obviously many factors affect sales each year. Interestingly, both farmers believed that the loyalty program had been effective and plan to continue using it.
- **"Meet the Farmer" Presentations.** We also scheduled a number of farmer presentations, allowing the farmer to talk to customers about their farm, how long they've been farming and to demonstrate some of their products, etc. In addition, we created a high quality one-page biography on each farmer who participated in a meet the farmer session. These were used as handouts at the presentations and provided the farmer with a biography that could be used on their website and Facebook page. We compared sales for the featured farmer on the day of their presentation to sales the week before and the week after. We conducted five Meet the Farmer presentations.

Sales increased hardly at all (an average of 1%) on the day of the presentation. When we looked at sales the week after each presentation we found that sales increased an average of 41% (the impacts ranged from -17% to +79%). Those that provided samples during their presentation, tended to see the largest impacts. (The instance in which sales declined the week following the presentation is likely an aberration, and the result of the presentation occurring the week of the Fourth of July holiday when all sales are very high.)

- **“Market Pairings”**. We decided to try an experiment we called “Market Pairings”. Our “Market Pairings” events involved a demonstration by a market staff person, volunteer, or board member; they used products from at least two different farmers and tried to highlight less common items; and they created recipes that anyone could make at home in twenty minutes or less. At each market pairing, we provided recipes and had signage listing the products that were being used in the demonstration and the market stalls where the foods could be purchased. This boosted sales of featured products by an average of 20%. We even found the improved sales to continue into the following week. We think this was so effective in part because it was a third-party endorsement of a product, and in part because the recipes were more approachable than those offered by professional chefs. One of the featured products, the rosemary-garlic jelly from one of our producers sold more than double its typical amount that week, and sold out despite the producer bringing extra to the market. The jelly continued to see high sales the week following the demonstration, a 42% increase in sales over the week prior to the Market Pairing Demonstration.
- **Special Days at the Market**. We put on a number of different events, such as Health Day, a Kids’ Day, and promotions for Father’s Day, as well as a Customer Appreciation Day. On **Health Day**, our partner Beebe Healthcare (a major provider of hospital and outpatient care services in our county), provided free diabetes and blood pressure screenings, and gave a talk and demo about heart-healthy cooking. The services provided were very helpful to our customers. Father’s Day events included a raffle for a grill and a demo on how to grill perfect meats for Dad. The producers whose meats were featured in our Father’s Day grilling demo, saw their sales increase by between 15% and 30%; the average increase was 25%. We also saw a 5% increase in overall market sales compared to the same week the prior year, and a \$1.47 increase in the average amount spent per customer at the market. On Seniors Over 55 Day we had a scavenger hunt with prizes of gift certificates to specific market stands donated by our farmers. It was challenging to get seniors to self-identify and participate in the activities. The prizes of gift certificates hopefully generated repeat business for our participating stalls, as customers collected their prizes. For Kids’ Day, we offered activities including a “salad on a stick” activity in which the children placed cut up vegetables and cherry tomatoes on a small skewer and ate them with a yogurt dip. It was fun to see how many children who claimed to hate vegetables ate them with glee off their stick. We also gave each child a “Veggie Passport” in which they collected the names of market stalls they visited that offered the fruits and vegetables pictured. Prizes such as donated books, coloring books and mini boxes of crayons were offered for completed passports. On our second annual Kids’ Day, we had children help plant a new tree in the park where we hold our farmers market. We offered bocce lessons for kids on the court beside our market. We also held a scavenger hunt where the children along with their parents went through the market searching for fun facts about the farmers and their products. Prizes again were donated books and coloring books. We offered a tasting snack of blueberries and

strawberries provided by two of our farmers. These donations were recognized with a thank you sign and increased foot traffic and sales to these farmers by 27% and 6%. We saw a 3% year over year increase in total spending at the market on Kids Day, and a 13% increase in attendance at the market. We also observed that the activities increased kids' and parents' engagement with the market and with farmers. Unfortunately, we do not count children in our gate counts of customers, and so can only rely on impressions of the impact of holding a special Kids Day on the number of children at the market. Farmers and market volunteers alike commented on the increased number of children at the market on Kids' Day, and the positive and fun impact it had on the market environment. We did record the number of children participating in the Kids' Day activities, and saw an increase of 18% in the number of children at our second Kids' Day compared to the first Kids' Day.

On **Customer Appreciation Day** we offered customers free cider provided by two of our farmers/producers, as they entered the market. Sales for these farmer/producers went up between 7-8% on Customer Appreciation Day, demonstrating the value of samples in driving sales. We also offered stickers to customers as they entered the market that read, "I Am Appreciated" and showed our acronym HLFM for the Historic Lewes Farmers Market. We also specifically asked and reminded our farmers to thank their customers personally for shopping at the market. We received great feedback from customers and felt that it positively impacted a sense of community and loyalty to the farmers market.

It is difficult to determine the exact impact of these special events on overall market sales due to weather and holidays also impacting sales, but we know that when specific products were featured in demonstrations and tastings, sales for these products increased between 8% and 30%. We also believe that these special event days are very useful for engaging the community and helping customers to feel invested in their market.

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, 2015). Include further explanation if necessary.
 - i. Number of direct jobs created: 2 part-time, 1 short term part-time
 - ii. Number of jobs retained: 1 part-time
 - iii. Number of indirect jobs created: We created a second market, which created multiple indirect jobs for the farmers who sell at the new market. We cannot assess the indirect jobs created.
 - iv. Number of markets expanded: We expanded programs at our established HLFM Saturday Market, and in the second year of operation of our newly created Wednesday Market expanded the number of farmers/producers selling at the market.
 - v. Number of new markets established: 1 new market created – The HLFM Wednesday Market.
 - vi. Market sales increased by \$51,992.64 and increased by 8.2%.
 - vii. Number of farmers/producers that have benefited from the project: Normally 28 – 32 farms are impacted by our market, with the support of the grant that has increased to 97. This is a result of the workshops we held for any interested farmers and not just

those who sell at our market. The number of farmers/producers impacted will continue to increase as we share the results of experiments.

a. Percent Increase: over a 200% increase.

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, we have increased our outreach efforts to low income members in our surrounding community. As noted above, we have developed a bilingual (Spanish/English) flyer that we provided to strategic local agencies and non-profits. We increased the number of new SNAP customers in 2016 by 57%, and then maintained the number of new SNAP customers being added in 2017. By adding a new market in a location that is more accessible to low income customers, we grew both our overall customer numbers and our SNAP customer numbers. Our efforts and results in reaching low income/low access populations are covered in more detail under Objective 3 above.
4. Discuss your community partnerships.
 - i. Who are your community partners? Sussex County FoodBank, Sussex County State Department, Sussex County Strong Communities Initiative, Casa San Francisco (part of Catholic Charities of Delaware), University of Delaware, Beebe Healthcare, Cape Henlopen Elementary Schools, Future Harvest CASA, Lewes Public Library, and Rehoboth Beach Film Society.
 - ii. How have they contributed to the overall results of the FMPP project? All of our aforementioned partners have helped us reach out to a greater percentage of our community and share information about our SNAP program, new events, and new market. Also, our University of Delaware partner has helped us bring up-to-date information on agriculture specialists and grants available to help our local farmers. We forged a new partnership with Future Harvest CASA around our Bio-nutrient Soil Workshop, and our Using Social Media Workshop, for which they did joint marketing with us for the workshops. We added Rehoboth Beach Film Society as a partner this year when we jointly sponsored a showing of the film *Wasted*, a documentary on food waste and ways in which farmers and communities can help reduce waste.
 - iii. How will they continue to contribute to your project's future activities, beyond the performance period of this FMPP grant? We will continue to partner and collaborate with the above named organizations moving into next year's market season and believe we will only build stronger and clearer lines of communication and mutual support. We plan to present the results of our grant at next years Future Harvest CASA conference.
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 JM Fortier, author of the book *The Market Farmer*, as the featured speaker at our Productivity Workshop for Farmers. We contracted with Dan Kitteridge to conduct the Bio-nutrient Soil Workshop on Feb 5-6 2017. We conducted two additional workshops in 2018 using contractors: Dan Hartman, author of *The Lean Farm*, taught a workshop on Lean Farming; and Tom Thunstrom taught a workshop on Using Social Media. The work of the contractors used to deliver workshops had a major impact on our results, by providing not only farmers/producers who sell at our market but also farmers/producers across our community. In addition, we used a contractor to improve our signage and visual presence.
6. Have you publicized any results yet?*

- i. If yes, how did you publicize the results? We have shared findings with our farmers at our farmer orientation session in April 2017 and again at our farmer appreciation dinner at the end of the 2017 market season. We shared the results to date with our volunteers at our “volunteer thank you” event on October 29, 2017.
- ii. To whom did you publicize the results? We have shared our results with the farmers/producers who sell at our markets and with our volunteers. On March 14, 2018, we made a presentation of our results at the annual Delaware Farmers Market Managers Meeting convened each year by the Delaware Department of Agriculture.
- iii. How many stakeholders (i.e. people, entities) did you reach? We have reached approximately 175 through presentations to date and a much larger number will be reached through our website.
- iv. We have posted the booklet *Creating a Farmers Market Living Lab: Lessons Learned in Growing a Farmers Market* on our website: <https://www.historiclewesfarmersmarket.org> to share our results.

*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? At the end of each workshop we conducted, we asked farmers to fill out a survey. For each of the workshops, we asked participants to rate the workshop in three specific categories: 1) the overall value of the workshop; 2) whether the workshop provided new ideas and information; 3) if they had plans to take action or change their practices based on the workshop. The feedback by workshop is provided below:
- ii. What feedback was relayed (specific comments)? Feedback by workshop is provided below:

Market Farmer Productivity Workshop –

- Overall Value: 91% of workshop participants rated the overall value of the workshop as very useful.
- Learned Something New: 91% said they had learned a great deal at the workshop about resources available to farmers/producers, 87% learned a great deal about sustainable farming, and 91% learned a great deal about improving the productivity of their operations.
- Plans to Take Action: 91% of participants said they planned to change some of their farming methods or practices, 91% planned to use new tools or different tools, and 91% plan to explore some of the resources available to them as farmers.
- We also learned from this survey that farmers in our area would like future workshops to cover: business planning and accounting, soil health building and no-till, perennial crops and grant writing workshops.

Lean Farming Workshop –

- Overall Value: 100% of workshop participants rated the overall value of the information provided by the presenter at the workshop as very useful, and 97% rated the value of the workshop as a whole as very useful.

- Learned Something New: 83% said that the workshop provided them with a great deal of new information, ideas or insights on how to improve the productivity of their operations, 78% said they learned new ideas about how to reduce waste on their farm, and 68% learned a great deal about improving the profitability of their operations.
- Plans to Take Action: as a result of the workshop, 84% plan to alter their farming methods or practices, 91% plan to improve the productivity of their operations, and 88% plan to improve their profitability.

Social Media Workshop –

- Overall Value: 100% of workshop participants rated the overall value of the information provided by the presenter at the workshop as very useful.
- Learned Something New: 100% said that the workshop provided them with a great deal of new information, ideas or insights on how to present themselves and their farm on social media.
- Plans to Take Action: as a result of the workshop: 100% plan to change the way present themselves on social media.

8. Budget Summary:

- 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:
- Did the project generate any income? No, this was not part of the project plan.
 - If yes, how much was generated and how was it used to further the objectives of the award?

9. Lessons Learned:

- 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).

Lessons Learned:

- We engaged early with farmers/producers to get their ideas on experiments we should conduct. This was critical to gaining their support and engagement.
 - We involved farmers/producers in developing ideas to test, and got their early participation in creating our living lab at the market. However, we tended to work with them each individually on the design and data collection for the experiments in which they would be involved. It would have been useful to hold a group meeting with the farmers participating in experiments to cover how experiments work and the basic design of conducting an experiment and collecting data..
 - We conducted several workshops as part of this grant, and evaluated each workshop using the same 3 categories of questions, but with questions in each category tailored to the specific workshop. If we were to do this again, we would include two or three identical questions on every questionnaire to make it easier to compare across workshops.
- If goals or outcome measures were not achieved, identify and share the lessons learned to help others expedite problem-solving: We are pleased that we were able to achieve all of our goals.

- 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: None.

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 plan to continue to use our market as a Living Lab and to continue to apply the lessons we learned from our living lab more broadly across market stalls. We also plan to share our findings to benefit other markets and farmers/producers.

- 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 plan to take additional steps in two areas. First, we plan to share our results more broadly. We will be doing this through presentations to relevant audiences at conferences and meetings, and we will distribute our report booklet, titled *Creating a Farmers Market Living Lab: Lessons Learned in Growing a Farmers Market*, to farmers market managers and to farmers and producers. The booklet covers not only the lessons we learned but also the steps other farmers markets can follow to create their own living lab to test ideas and become more effective in growing their market. Second, we plan to continue to test ideas in our market's living lab. For example, we would like study in more detail what types of signage and pricing approaches increase sales more.

We are grateful to have received a Farmers Market Promotion Program grant and believe that it has benefited our market greatly and plan to make sure that others also benefit from our experience.