

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

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Report Date Range: <i>(e.g. September 30, 20XX-September 29, 20XX)</i>	April 1 – September 30, 2017
Authorized Representative Name:	John Phelps
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Recipient Organization Name:	Cumberland County Fiscal Court
Project Title as Stated on Grant Agreement:	Farmers Market of Cumberland County Local Food Initiative
Grant Agreement Number: <i>(e.g. 14-FMPPX-XX-XXXX)</i>	15-FMPP-KY-0010
Year Grant was Awarded:	2015
Project City/State:	Burkesville, Kentucky
Total Awarded Budget:	\$ 86,028.56

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: Kathy Williams; Email: Cumberland.k@gmail.com; Phone: 270-433-7400

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: The project will increase domestic consumption of locally produced fresh food by enhancing the existing Cumberland County Farmers Market with a better location and better service.

a. Progress Made: Through 2015, the Farmers Market in Burkesville had only cramped quarters in the parking slips before the Justice Center, not enough to hold many vendors, with no shade, and no space at all for customer parking. The FMPP grant allowed us to launch our 2016 Market season in a rented a commercial location on Burkesville’s Main Street, in the parking lot of a vacant Dairy Queen. We gained the use of this large, flat, paved, wonderfully visible from the street, centrally located parking lot with an excellent marquee sign with movable letters.

We initiated electrical service. We purchased a 30’ x 30’ high quality frame-style white tent which was excellent at providing space and shade for 6 vendor booths with a customer aisle down the middle. We purchased several 10 x 10 and 10 x 20 white commercial-grade vendor booth tents to set opposite the main tent with a generous promenade space between.

We outfitted and permitted a hot-food, ready to eat food service booth with a grill and stainless-steel counters, handwashing station and all equipment sufficient to meet food safety regulations. We purchased a large legal-for-trade calculating scale used at market by any vendors who did not already have their own scale,

which was most of them. We purchased 2 large fans and heavy-duty extension cords, and cord protectors to reduce trip hazard.

We bought a chest freezer and a glass-top cold merchandiser, outfitted a small utility trailer to hold these appliances, permitted that trailer as a mobile market to sell locally produced meats, eggs, and baked goods. The mobile freezer allowed us to expand the food service booth with a blender to create a smoothie booth.

We bought a hand truck, used every Market day to help vendors load and unload; and a ladder to allow us to hang sidewalls as needed on the big tent. We bought display tables and chairs for vendors and for the picnic area, and a locking storage trailer to hold all this equipment between Market sessions.

We also purchased a whole-animal Pig Cooker and used it 3 times for local food banquets / music events. We hired musicians to play at our market 12 times in our two-year project.

The FMPP grant allowed County Judge Executive John Phelps to hire the Market Coordinator Kathy Williams, and supply her with a booth space at market and a computer, printer, laminator and software to complete the paperwork, accounting, poster production and all banking and office needs between Market events.

- b. Impact on Community:** Enjoying the hot breakfast, special smoothies, music events, many more vendors and a much bigger assortment of available products, a solid body of repeat customers have claimed our Farmers Market as their own. We set up espresso and coffee sales, a big plus for customers, and brought a PA to provide mood music when live music is not happening.

There is a festival feel to the Market, supporting new friendships, long-term vendors and giving many new, aspiring producers the opportunity to show their products, use the equipment and have space under tent, and find out if being a Market Vendor is a good fit for them. So many people have celebrated the new, enhanced Market and chosen to participate as buyers and sellers, we anticipate a continued rise in both vendor and customer counts in the years to come.

ii. Goal/Objective 2: The project will provide outreach to recruit and inform local producers to participate in the Farmers Market of Cumberland County, and increase their marketing opportunities in other ways as well.

- a. Progress Made:** The Farmers Market in **2015 had 3 or 4 vendors** setting up each Saturday, with a total of 8 vendors registered. The awarded FMPP grant was front page in the Cumberland County News, October 2015. By April 2016, the start of our Market season, we had 25 vendor registrations, and another 26 applications collected by the end of that season. Due to the newspaper articles, the Facebook page, visits to the radio station for Talk Around Town interviews, calls to friends and friends-of-friends, new vendors flocked in. We averaged, in **2016, 10.5 vendors** every Saturday. Some vendors came only once or twice, and by the end of the season we could see who were the committed, repeating sellers.

During our 2017 season, 13 of those professional vendors from 2016 registered again at the start of the season, and 25 new producers joined the list by close of the season, allowing us to **average 13 vendors in 2017** per Saturday. The new freezer / display fridge combo opened the door for two new meat producers to sell their product

The FMPP grant also allowed us to hire knowledgeable presenters for four on-farm workshops: “High Tunnel Growing,” “Getting Ready for Market Season,” “Lawn-to-Garden Workshop,” and “Transition to Fall Gardening.” Thirty-nine gardeners or farmers attended those workshops; half of that number were also vendors, half were home gardeners.

- b. **Impact on Community:** The much greater visibility of our commercial location, the influx and willingness of so many new customers who are open to buying local food, and the ensuing increase in sales created a virtuous circle of success for everyone. The “buzz” of our Farmers Market has brought producers out of the woodwork, so to speak.

Our Market is four times bigger than when we started, in number of vendors. Just when we think we know everyone who produces food in this area, another surprise producer emerges to raise our standard again. People stay in this county often because farming is what they know, and more often people move here to this remote rural county to fulfill their dreams of growing their own food. Our biggest increase in vendor count was not due to old-timers who have been at it for years; we have young, college-educated couples showing up to give it a try, and they quickly become leaders!

We also welcomed members of the Mennonite community as producers and vendors, and several home gardeners who sold for the very first time, encouraged by our diverse and vibrant crowd.

iii. **Goal/Objective 3: The project will develop and implement a marketing plan to advertise and promote the Farmers Market to local consumers.**

- a. **Progress Made:** To launch our first season (2016), we developed a logo for our Market, purchased 6 utility pole banners and two large billboard banners to use as signage above our marquee sign. Market Coordinator refined a weekly poster format, listing expected vendors and their offerings for the next Saturday Market, posted at 15 locations in town plus 4 vacation Marinas nearby.

Market Coordinator wrote weekly radio ads and Facebook ads also promoting our vendors and products, establishing our Brand with clarity and consistency. We had an ongoing ad in the local newspaper and built a website (www.cumberlandcountyfood.com) to expand the information about our Market offered online.

In our second season (2017), we added a flyer specific to SNAP customers, explaining the Double Dollars program funded by Community Farm Alliance (CFA). Market Coordinator went door to door in subsidized housing neighborhoods to distribute those flyers, and these flyers were also distributed by the coordinator of our county’s Senior Voucher program.

- b. **Impact on Community:** Where we live, in Burkesville Kentucky, is truly the middle of nowhere, an hour from any interstate freeway. There is ONE traffic light in the whole county of only 7,000 people. We aren’t even big enough to have a McDonald’s restaurant. To have something, anything, happening in town is amazing to our people. In 2015, we counted customers to have a baseline for our records,

and 100 per day was the count. The vendors said, "It's always the exact same people, who come at the same time of day."

Starting our Market in April 2016, we had a Grand Opening day in May and saw a surge in customer count to 360 that blew us away. We gave away 10 door prizes and half of them lived in a distant county! They had been here for the weekend visiting family. We are "what to do on a Saturday in Burkesville!"

Witnessing our consistent waves of customers since that first big day, the vendors who have been with the Market for years say, 'these are all new people this year. We have not seen these customers before this year.' Senior Vouchers, new in 2016, brought in 75 individuals who became repeat customers, and in 2017 our focus on recruiting SNAP business brought in 49 households as customers.

iv. Goal/Objective 4: The project will work towards improving the market's sustainability by incorporating as a non-profit entity and developing a long-term business plan so that the market continues to support the needs of our community after this project is complete.

- a. **Progress Made:** The County Judge Executive John Phelps was the official applicant for our FMPP grant, with the Cumberland County Fiscal Court as the sponsoring public benefit corporation. The Fiscal Court acted as a sponsor and advisor in getting the nuts and bolts of the Marketplace in order. After our first successful season in 2016, it was time to begin to stand on our own.

In November 2016, Market Coordinator filed papers with the State of Kentucky to form a genuine non-profit, and soon submitted the necessary application to the IRS for federal recognition. May 9, 2017, we received the IRS letter informing us that our application for non-profit status had been approved, retroactive to November 2016. This allowed us to complete the 2017 Double Dollars grant application to Community Farm Alliance under our own Farmers Market of Cumberland County organization, no longer needing to rely on the County Fiscal Court nor trouble them with any administrative handling. We have a dynamic group of five individuals on our board, and have completed the required four meetings (per year) for our first year. In the board meetings.

- b. **Impact on Community:** The vendors have developed a strong sense of community after sharing space all season, and have requested we continue meeting monthly throughout this winter for potluck and connection. We are already getting commitments from our steady vendors for 2018, and one of the lone-wolf producers from across town has asked to join us for next season (we like that.)

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.

- a. **Number of direct jobs created:** 19 new jobs created, (7 new jobs created in 2016; another 12 new jobs in 2017)
- b. **Number of jobs retained:** 4 jobs retained (4 vendors have continued at Market since 2015 and before, happy to see their sales volume increase substantially.)

- c. **Number of indirect jobs created:** 1 stands out: a late-comer hot foods vendor couple was recruited at their booth, to manage the new concession stand at an auction house.
- d. **Number of markets expanded:** One market expanded
- e. **Number of new markets established:** One new market established.
- f. **Ag Market annual sales increased \$32,654; from \$10,000 in 2015 to \$42,654 in 2017. This means our sales increased by 326% over the period of the FMPP grant.**
- g. **Number of farmers/producers that have benefited from the project:** Before our FMPP grant, in **2015, 8 vendors** registered to participate in the Market, averaging 3 or 4 vendors per Saturday, for 14 weeks. In **2016, 31 vendors** showed at Market, and our average vendor count for Saturday Market was 10.54, for 29 weeks. In **2017, 38 vendors** offered product at least once, and our average vendor count for 2017 Saturday Markets was 12.96. Accounting for repeat vendors and subtracting crafters, 51 Agricultural producers or producer-households benefited directly by setting up at least once at our FMPP supported Farmers Market over the 2-year period.
 - i. Percent Increase: **375% increase: from 8 to 38 vendors** participating annually.
 - Percent Increase: **258% increase: from 3.5 to 12.96 vendors** at each Saturday Market

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?

In 2016, we enjoyed the influx of 75 Senior Vouchers customers, as Extension had registered for this program the previous fall, even before the FMPP grant was awarded. Our 2016 Double Dollars program, funded by Community Farm Alliance (CFA) made the most of these Senior Voucher customers, and we enjoyed a 99.98% redemption rate, the highest ever in our state. In 2017, Market Coordinator put special effort into recruiting new SNAP customers. Total Market SNAP sales in 2015 (pre FMPP grant) was \$20. In 2016, our SNAP sales rose to \$300. In our 2017 Market season, we did \$2,280.00 in SNAP sales.

This phenomenal increase of 11,000% over the two years, and a 660% increase from 2016 to 2017, was the result of several factors. The Double Dollars program gave good reason to put a lot of attention into recruiting SNAP sales. Market Coordinator created flyers and walked door-to-door in all 3 subsidized housing project neighborhoods to talk to people or hang a flyer on the door, "if anyone you know is on Food Stamps, please tell them!" The weekly newspaper ad was especially tailored to explain the Double Dollars program. Recruitment was further aided by partnering with the local natural foods buying club (Otherworld Food Co-op, Inc.) to inform those customers (20% of whom are SNAP customers) of the SNAP Double Dollars program at the Farmers Market. *In our county of only 7,000 residents, our Farmers Market was **third in the State** of Kentucky, for volume of SNAP sales!* This was comparable with Lexington and Louisville markets.

4. Discuss your community partnerships.

- a. **Who are your community partners?** County Fiscal Court and the Office of the County Judge Executive, the Cumberland County Public Library, the Cumberland County News local paper, WKYR the local radio station, Cumberland County Farm Bureau,, Lake Cumberland District Regional Health Department, Kentucky Center for Agriculture and Rural Development (KCARD), the local chapter of Veterans of Foreign Wars, Community Farm Alliance (CFA), Hill and Hollow Certified Organic CSA, Otherworld Food Co-op, Inc.

- b. **How have they contributed to the overall results of the FMPP project?** Long-time successful farmer, Paul Bela of Hill and Hollow Organic CSA Farm provided workshop presentations for our group. The Cumberland County Public Library hosts training meetings for us. The continuing involvement of County Judge Executive John Phelps and the Cumberland County Fiscal Court has been essential in administering the FMPP grant. Jo Murley writes a popular weekly column for the Cumberland County News, and she has featured our Farmers Market three times. The local chapter of Veterans of Foreign Wars brought in new customers and increased our popularity by setting up their welcome booth with us, several times during summer 2017. Otherworld Food Co-op was a resource in recruiting SNAP customers seeking high quality food. WKYR Radio has been fabulous and welcoming to all our ads, adding musical backgrounds and the perfect voice to appeal to local clientele. Community Farm Alliance, a state-wide organization, has provided our Double Dollars grants, and ongoing guidance and technical support. KCARD mentored our Market Coordinator as she wrote the initial FMPP grant proposal, and stayed close to give feedback while we submitted for IRS non-profit status.
- c. **How will they continue to contribute to your project's future activities, beyond the performance period of this FMPP grant?** We expect all the community members who made contributions in 2017 to continue during 2018 as well, with more developments on the horizon. County Judge Executive John Phelps continues his quest to somehow purchase a piece of commercial real estate on Main Street, (hopefully our current location) that will allow us to build a permanent shelter; per his vision of combining the Farmers Market with the Visitor's center manned by the Chamber of Commerce. Hill and Hollow Organic Farm has just published their schedule of upcoming educational events; one special workshop or teaching event each month during 2018. The County Health Department is on board to refer WIC recipients to our Market for voucher redemption, and Community Farm Alliance just asked Market Coordinator to speak at their annual conference, sharing our strategy that allowed us to increase SNAP participation by 660%. We expect to see the VFW members again at Market 2018, and continue our advertising connections at WKYR and the Cumberland County News. The President of the Board of our local Farm Bureau is one of our vendors, and she keeps the Market's interests in mind with her work in that organization.
5. **Are you using contractors to conduct the work? Yes. If so, how did their work contribute to the results of the FMPP project?** Our Market Coordinator has been contract labor, responsible for her own tax withholding and insurance. Our workshop presenters were hired as contract labor, as were our musical acts.
6. **Have you publicized any results yet? Yes.**
- a. **If yes, how did you publicize the results?**
- Every market day, each vendor completed an "estimated sales" slip reporting the sales of produce/plants, meat-eggs-diary, value-added foods, ready-to-eat food and crafts. Market Coordinator counted customers with clickers and the aid of volunteers, and collected the estimated sales slips at the end of the day. Each week the data was entered into excel sheets to generate the next graphic report.

- b. **To whom did you publicize the results?** The consistently updated graphic report showing customer counts and total market Ag sales was printed and laminated, and carried around to show to vendors at Market, and then kept at the Coordinator's table at every Market Day to show customers. The summation graphic showing 3 years of customer counts and total Ag Sales is posted on our website at www.cumberlandcountyfood.com/grant. The summation graphic is also posted on our Facebook page www.facebook.com/cumberlandcountyfood.

At the end of our second season (2017) our totals for SNAP sales were compiled and reported to Community Farm Alliance (CFA) who sponsors our Double Dollars program. Because our Market demonstrated the remarkable increase in SNAP sales (2015-\$20; 2016-\$300; 2017-\$2,280) Market Coordinator was invited by CFA to speak at their annual statewide meeting, sharing her strategies for new SNAP customer outreach.

- c. **How many stakeholders (i.e. people, entities) did you reach?** The CFA Annual Meeting was attended by 46 people including CFA staff and board members, Farmers Market Managers from across Kentucky, and State of Kentucky officials who oversee all Farmers Markets and the Kentucky WIC and Senior Voucher programs. At the presentation, two Market Managers approached to ask for more details. I have also received a call from a Knoxville, Tennessee Farmers Market Americorps volunteer who was told of our big success with SNAP sales, asking for advice. The outline for the presentation given in Berea, Kentucky by Market Coordinator on December 6, 2017, is included with this report.

The Facebook post showing the summation graphic showing 3 years of Ag Sales and Customers Counts was seen by 1,031 people, identified by Facebook as Burkesville residents. The summation graphic is attached.

7. **Have you collected any feedback from your community and additional stakeholders about your work?** Yes. Being invited to speak at the Annual CFA Meeting was positive feedback, and:

- a. **If so, how did you collect the information?** Facebook provides such an excellent forum for feedback. The following comments were made on Facebook:

- b. **What feedback was relayed (specific comments)?**

"We all really enjoyed Market this year! I believe next season will be even better! FMCC is just going to keep growing!!!"

"THANKS, to you for all your hard work and time spent on this! Also THANKS TO ALL THE VENDORS AND FAMILIES for growing all the food, then setting up and selling it.

Everyone was always smiling and pleasant too! So hope to see everyone next year!!!"

"Cumberland Co needs you & the way the Farmers Market is handled. Thank you for your service to Cumberland Co."

"Love the Farmer's Market!!"

"Kay, I must commend you on your efforts this year on how you post for the market, great job! It's really nice to see who's at the market and what they offer each week 😊"

"My favorite farmers market"

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:

- 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).** On the positive side, our biggest lesson was to learn to let go of worrying, and accept that the time is now for expansion in Farmers Market participation and local food sales generally. New producers and vendors are certain to come forward in the future, as they already have. Our advertisements and outreach did not have to educate or change minds, instead, we just had to connect with the interest that was already there.

Even in such a small county as ours, only 7,000 people total, there turned out to be a steady stream of interested producers and customers willing to give market a try. By keeping accurate statistics, we learned that total sales volume consistently mirrors customer count.

Making the Market *easy to see* when the customers drive by, and making it *easy to park* so they can shop at the Market, is no small part of the equation. When people say “location, location, location,” are the three factors that make a successful business, they are telling the truth!

It is worth paying money to rent or buy such a location. We heard two consistent praises from customers and vendors alike. “This location is so much better!” And “Thank you for bringing so much new variety into our Market!”

The biggest lesson we learned on the negative side, is that we can’t please everyone. Regardless of our measurable improvements, we lost four vendors at the end of our first season, because they were not comfortable with having *any* operating expenses related to the Market, going into the future. Anticipating 2018 costs, they didn’t believe the commercial space was worth paying for. They didn’t want to recruit so many vendors. It was surprising to discover that these few didn’t even want the Double Dollars program. It was hard to accept that our best choice was to let go and allow two registered Farmers Markets in our little town. The County Extension Service was helpful by taking on administrative duties for the vendors who decided to set up independently. After seeing the successful season play out in 2017 for *both* registered markets, it is now apparent that the two-market development was a solution to a problem, rather than a problem, itself. Sometimes the visions held by participants are different enough that an expansion into two organizations is appropriate.

Market Coordinator, and our non-profit Board, and our core group of repeat vendors do have confidence in our ability to pay basic expenses again for 2018 and beyond, at our proven commercial location, because the non-profit formed to carry us forward already has that money in the bank.

We will have more Banquet – Fundraisers next year, starting earlier in the season. We now know that it works better to do banquets concurrent with an evening market rather than Saturday, late morning. It also works better to have our mid-week Farmers Market sessions in the afternoon rather than in the morning!

- ii. **If goals or outcome measures were not achieved, identify and share the lessons learned to help others expedite problem-solving.** Our goals and outcome measures were beyond our expectations. We tripled our customer count and quadrupled the total annual sales. Our SNAP sales were fantastically improved.
- iii. **Describe any lessons learned in the administration of the project that might be helpful for others who would want to implement a similar project:** For me, as Market Coordinator, the statistical tracking was essential to the entire project success. If ever I felt discouraged, being able to look at the statistical graphs showing our performance records was so helpful. Counting and measuring with hard numbers was so important to maintaining confidence in our plan. Being able to look at the weekly updated statistics, and share these graphs all around with interested parties, removed any doubts that we were on the right course. There were so many positive and gracious comments, all through the project, and we remember the good experiences we had; but having the cold facts of the customer counts and the cash bottom line was really the most solid set of evidences.

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.** We already have an agreement with the property owner, that our Market will continue to occupy the same excellent commercial location in 2018. The excellent equipment the FMPP grant bought for us will continue to serve in 2018 and beyond. The non-profit that was formed in accordance with our workplan already has the money in the bank to pay rent and insurance for our 2018 season, from the proceeds of Pig Roast / Local Food Banquets.

We have already received commitments from our steady vendors, and one of the lone-wolf vendors from the north side of town has expressed his interest in joining the group for 2018. Market Coordinator has committed to continue her management through the 2018 season, as a volunteer, if necessary.

The community response has been so overwhelmingly positive, we have no doubts that this Farmers Market will continue to grow and provide opportunities for economic development and income for local producers and entrepreneurs. Most of the 19 jobs we have created will be retained.

The comments from the low-earning vendors have been some of the most appreciative, saying that it isn't about the money, it is about the human connection they experience, getting out and being involved with people. We won't give that up.

We expect vendor involvement to continue to increase, and our Double Dollars program will continue and expand for WIC and Sr Vouchers and SNAP. Looking at this 2-year trend, it is reasonable to expect at least a 25% increase in all counts, on an annual basis into the future.

- 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?** Our next goal is to successfully adapt to this change of being at the end of our Federal Grant,

while maintaining the improvements we lived with during the grant. We have already come a long way with this, with developing the Pig Roast / Music / Banquet event that celebrates local food and the market community, while bringing in revenue for our expenses. Our enhanced Farmers Market will continue next year at our same location, with all our programs intact.

Market Coordinator is researching other possibilities for funding for her own pay, and for advertising funds, with the guidance of County Judge Executive John Phelps, Community Farm Alliance and Kentucky Center for Agriculture Research and Development. Keeping up with the Double Dollars program is a high priority, as well as initiating a Farmacy program, which would allow medical prescriptions for weekly fresh produce to be subsidized for patients with diet-related illness.

A partnership with Otherworld Food Co-op to create a year-round storefront for locally produced goods as well as sustainably grown products from other regions is also a strong possibility for our future. We shall continue our partnership with Hill and Hollow Organic CSA, the farmers who provided our series of workshops, who have already forecast their year of monthly educational programs through 2018. We have a lot to look forward to!

Thank you so much for this fabulous experience, our county has benefited greatly. Customers and vendors alike are eager to carry on in 2018 and beyond.