

**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 th , 2015 – March 1 st , 2017
Authorized Representative Name:	Lebo Moore
Authorized Representative Phone:	651-433-3676
Authorized Representative Email:	lebo@mnfoodassociation.org
Recipient Organization Name:	MN Food Association
Project Title as Stated on Grant Agreement:	Big River Farms: Building direct-to-consumer market opportunities for historically underserved, beginning farmers
Grant Agreement Number: <i>(e.g. 14-FMPPX-XX-XXXX)</i>	15FMPPMN0074
Year Grant was Awarded:	2015
Project City/State:	Marine on St. Croix, MN
Total Awarded Budget:	\$99,320

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

Same Authorized Representative listed above (check if applicable).

Different individual: Name: _____; Email: _____; Phone: _____

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1. State the goals/objectives of your project as outlined in the grant narrative and/or approved by FMPP staff. If the goals/objectives from the narrative have changed from the grant narrative, please highlight those changes (e.g. “new objective”, “new contact”, “new consultant”, etc.). You may add additional goals/objectives if necessary. For each item below, qualitatively discuss the progress made and indicate the impact on the community, if any.
 - i. Goal/Objective 1: Increase domestic consumption of local, organic produce by building direct-to-consumer delivery routes in diverse low-income communities in the Twin Cities.
 - Progress Made:
 - Two farmers developed direct-to-consumer delivery routes in their neighborhoods increasing their sale of domestic produce in low-income communities.
 - From these delivery routes, and one CSA membership using EBT payments, the farmers made a total of \$1,371 in direct sale of organic, local produce to community members.
 - Impact on Community:
 - Farmers learned to process payments using an EBT machine, market and sell produce to family and community members, increase sales of both traditional and culturally specific crops and gain significant marketing skills necessary for the development of their independent business and overall access to healthy food in their community.
 - Community members were able to purchase healthy food directly from a farmer in their neighborhood and educated on the importance of buying local and organic produce.
 - ii. Goal/Objective 2: Provide training and education to historically underserved, beginning farmers on building direct-to-consumer delivery routes and selling at farmer’s markets.
 - Progress Made:
 - Developed training and policy regarding the use of the EBT machine and delivery routes. 2 farmers participated in the training.
 - Developed hands-on market management training including inventory management, budgeting, market stall set-up, customer relations, and EBT/Market Bucks program. 11 farmers participated in the training.
 - 22 farmers received individualized training in conducting harvest estimates and succession planting to ensure produce availability, safe and efficient post-harvest handling and delivery of produce to direct to consumer markets.
 - 22 Farmers trained in developing and implementing food safety plans for direct to consumer markets.
 - 11 farmers trained on setting-up a market stall to increase sales using market supplies including tents, scales, tables, baskets and signage for pricing/branding.
 - One-to-one assistance for 3 non-native English speakers and limited computer literacy in applying for Farmers Market stalls and understanding market rules, regulations and operation procedures.
 - Impact on Community:

- Market shoppers introduced to culturally specific crops including Roselle, Daikon Radish, Asian Eggplant, and hot peppers.
 - Increased personal capacity in building consumer relationships.
 - Improved farmer familiarity with new and alternative market possibilities.
 - Increased access to local and organic produce in farmer communities across the Twin Cities metro area, including Hmong, Karen, Bhutanese, Latino and African American neighborhoods.
 - Farmers gained knowledge, computer literacy skills and resources for applying to and participating in Farmers Markets in the Twin Cities Metro Area.
- iii. Goal/Objective 3: Develop new market opportunities for farmers through expansion of domestic farmers' markets, community-supported agriculture programs, agri-tourism activities, and other direct producer-to-consumer market opportunities.
- Progress Made:
 - Secured four additional domestic farmers market stalls for the winter 2015/2016 and summer 2016/2017. We successfully accomplished our sales goal of \$12,000. Farmers received 70% of that income. The remaining 30% went back into market training.
 - 11 farmers sold their own produce at least twice during the season at a domestic farmers market stall.
 - 250 plus attendees to the 2016 on farm harvest party for CSA members and farm community.
 - 2016 participant of the Eat Local Farm Tour which attracted 300 attendees to the farm for wagon rides, farm tours, youth activities, food and a pop-up market stand.
 - Hosted a 30-member delegation of Farmers Market Managers from China through the Institute for Agricultural Trade and Policy (IATP). Provided a tour and education regarding our farm training and market programs.
 - Tour site for the Beginning Farmer Rancher Development Program (BFRDP) conference in July of 2016. Hosted a group of 50 BFRDP recipients from around the US who toured the farm, and learned about our farm training and market programs through presentations from farmer participants and staff.
 - Facilitated a farm tour for 16 students from the University of Minnesota enrolled in a horticulture marketing course to learn about building capacity and markets for local food systems.
 - Market Manager is an appointed member of the Ramsey County Food and Nutrition Commission, and is a member of the Equity Action Team of the MN Food Access Network.
 - Impact on Community:

- Doubled opportunities for farmers to sell at markets and gain hands on experience in direct to producer sales.
 - Farmers received 100% of profits from produce sales for the markets they attended, and 50% of profits from CSA sales.
 - 8 weeks of the farmers market were managed independently by farmer participants, providing the skills and experience needed to apply and prepare for their own markets in the 2017 growing season.
 - Farmers gave 17 presentations at the farm and around the Twin Cities in university classrooms, the MN State Fair and at the 11th annual Immigrant Farmer Minority Conference, increasing the outreach and presence of MFA in local food movements and support of local farmers in our community.
 - Community events on the farm helped to retain CSA membership, recruit new CSA members, connect farmers to CSA members and develop stronger farmer/consumer relationships.
 - Participation in the food and nutrition commission and MFAN maintains a connection for MFA staff and farmer participants to engage in local food policy which directly impacts local food markets.
- iv. Goal/Objective 4: Reach an expanded consumer base for aggregated Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) program through marketing and outreach efforts.
- Progress Made:
 - 165 members for the 2016 summer CSA and 50 members for the Fall CSA, of which 40% were new members.
 - 40 guests joined us for a CSA member party at Sociable Cider Werks to promote National CSA day 2017, recruit CSA members and connect members with drop site hosts, farmers and farm volunteers.
 - Participated in Small Farm Central's National CSA Day on Feb. 24th, 2017 through social media, email blasts and CSA member sign-up discounts.
 - Managed drop site hosts at 10 delivery sites for the 2016 CSA season. Worked with hosts to promote the CSA in their community through 1:1 meetings and tabling at community events.
 - Maintained 9 drop site hosts and created 2 new drop sites for the 2017 CSA season.
 - Designed and distributed marketing materials for Big River Farms CSA to drop site hosts and current CSA members including event banners, buttons, stickers, window clings, and 2016/2017 CSA promotional postcards.
 - 9 Farmer participants received one-to-one support from volunteers to design individualized marketing materials such as, business cards,

promotional postcards, stories and flyers for the development of their own, independent markets.

- Farmer's marketing materials were used to generate publicity through CSA newsletters, social media, and farmers markets.
 - Developed a Marketing Plan to ensure successful implementation and financial success of CSA and Farmers Market operations for the 2017 growing season.
 - Increased social media engagement by an average of 45% each month through more dedicated management, posting and linking between Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.
- Impact on the community
 - Over half of our CSA members in 2016 were first time members. Increased support from the community speaks to our outreach and marketing efforts.
 - Drop sites in suburban communities make it easier for people living in peri-urban areas to have access to local and organic produce through our CSA.
 - Designing and distributing new marketing materials helped to refresh our brand and generate new awareness and support for the marketing and training programs at MN Food Association.
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: 1, Market Manager
 - ii. Number of jobs retained: 1, Marketing Manager
 - iii. Number of indirect jobs created: 2 seasonal staff per year Oct. 2015-March 2017
 - iv. Number of markets expanded: Five total. 2, Kingfield Summer Markets 2016/2017. 2, Kingfield Winter Markets 2015/2016. 1, West Side Farmers Market
 - v. Number of new markets established: 4 through Kingfield. 3 farmers received assistance in applying independently for their own market stands for the 2017 growing season.
 - vi. Market sales increased by \$6,000 and increased by 100%. *Note: Due to closing our grant earlier than anticipated, we do not have this data for the 2017 growing season. We anticipate that at least 2 farmers will manage individual stalls and 14 farmers will participate in our market training program. Our goal for the 2017 season is \$15,000 in sales, a \$3,000 increase, due to our work building customer relationships and developing new marketing materials.*
 - vii. Number of farmers/producers that have benefited from the project: 90
 - Percent Increase: 17%
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?
- i. MFA is the only farming organization of its kind in Minnesota that serves all ethnic, cultural, and language groups living and working in our state. In 2016, eight different

cultures were represented in the program. Our customer base continues to evolve as the farmer demographics continue to change.

- ii. In 2016 we worked with two farmers from Bhutan to secure delivery routes for the 2016 growing season who were successful in developing consumer markets within the Bhutanese community of Saint Paul. In addition, we worked with Karen, Hmong, Ethiopian, Somali and African American farmers to increase sales through farmers markets, CSA and delivery routes in their communities.
- iii. In 2016 our West Side Farmers Market stall was taken over by a Bhutanese farmer enrolled in the training program. This Market is located in West St. Paul MN a self-sustaining multicultural community servicing many ethnic groups, diverse age and religious demographics in addition to Latino, Southeast Asian and African populations.
- iv. Our markets programs strive to ensure that all consumers have access to the good food they deserve, while putting money back into the pockets of local farmers. From the Fall of 2015 to March 2017, we have developed and continue developing alternative markets and relationships that focus distribution in underserved neighborhoods while also maintaining fair prices for both consumers and farmers. We work to promote community awareness and access to specialized ethnic crops, as there is a great demand for culturally significant crops in many immigrant communities in the Twin Cities Metro area. Through community delivery routes, farm stands and other marketing efforts, we are making crops like Daikon, Roselle, Hanchotte, Asian eggplant and hot peppers available to more immigrant communities as well as historically common outlets like CSA memberships and farmers markets.

4. Discuss your community partnerships.

- i. Who are your community partners?
 - MFA relies on a strong, interdisciplinary network of partners in the community to increase our capacity in training and developing markets for new organic farmers. Through this grant we strengthened our relationships with CSA members, The Kingfield Farmers Market, the Latino Economic Development Center and the Saint Paul and Ramsey County Food and Nutrition Commission. In addition we continue to work closely with culturally specific agencies including Hmong American Partnership and the Karen Organization of MN.
- ii. How have they contributed to the results you've already achieved?
 - MFA continually seeks out new partnerships and alignments to enhance the effectiveness and capacity of our programs and broaden our reach. We believe in the necessity of working together to accomplish our mission of building a sustainable and resilient food system.
 - The Kingfield Farmers Market provided space for the farmer's market training program and has supported farmer participants in finding independent market stalls to manage and learning how to accept SNAP benefit payments.
 - Farmers were supported by the Latino Economic Development Center through assistance in developing marketing materials, business cards, and honing customer relations.
 - Our CSA members continue to build capacity for farmer participants and provide a guaranteed market for direct to consumer produce each season.

- As an appointed member of the Food and Nutrition Commission, the market manager has gained knowledge in the arena of local food policy and connected with dedicated organizations and residents around issues of local food access.
- iii. How will they contribute to future results?
- We continue to rely on immigrant run organizations to help us in establishing delivery routes and alternative market opportunities for farmers.
 - We work with immigrant farming organizations including the Latino Economic Development Center and Hmong American Partnership and the Karen Organization of MN to facilitate long-term buying and market opportunities for farmer participants in low-income, low-access communities, particularly the neighborhoods in which they reside.
 - Farmers Market partners help us maintain year round sales opportunities for at Winter Markets in addition to year-round branding/promotional opportunities for beginning farmers in the process of establishing their own small business.
 - CSA members continue to invest in farmers and farmer training through their yearly membership.
 - The Market Manager holds a three year term on the Food and Nutrition Commission and continues to advocate for local food marketing in the Twin Cities metro area.
5. Are you using contractors to conduct the work? If so, how did their work contribute to the results of the FMPP project? *Not applicable. No contractors were used for this project.*
6. Have you publicized any results yet?*
- i. If yes, how did you publicize the results?
 - Through social media, CSA newsletters and quarterly newsletters to partners.
 - Published a 2015 annual report
 - Presentation on record keeping and market inventory management at the National Incubator Farm Training Initiative (NIFTI) conference.
 - ii. To whom did you publicize the results?
 - Partners, Farmer Participants, community members, general public, CSA members and fellow NIFTI members/conference attendees.
 - iii. How many stakeholders (i.e. people, entities) did you reach? 3,500
- *Send any publicity information (brochures, announcements, newsletters, etc.) electronically along with this report. Non-electronic promotional items should be digitally photographed and emailed with this report (do not send the actual item).
7. Have you collected any feedback from your community and additional stakeholders about your work?
- i. If so, how did you collect the information?
 - Farmer Interviews and listening sessions, CSA Member Surveys and interviews.
 - ii. What feedback was relayed (specific comments)?

Farmer 1: *"I learned that you have to listen a lot, but also experiment and take your own risks - there is not one right way or wrong way to farm."*

Farmer 2: *"One of our biggest accomplishments was learning the CSA process. Now we understand how to successfully build these relationships if*

we decide to do it post Big River Farms - how to communicate, produce, and manage the process."

CSA Member 2015: *"My first year with Big River Farms. I loved the variety and the recipes help me to know what to do with the veggies I'd never tried before. I will definitely join again next year."*

CSA Member 2: *"I appreciate the quality of this CSA and the fact that it supports non-Anglo farmers. The last email was PERFECT and I felt proud to receive a CSA from Big River Farms."*

8. Budget Summary:

- i. As part of the FMPP closeout procedures, you are required to submit the SF-425 (Final Federal Financial Report). Check here if you have completed the SF-425 and are submitting it with this report: YES
- ii. Did the project generate any income?
 - If yes, how much was generated and how was it used to further the objectives of the award? In 2016 we generated \$12,000 in farmer's market sales. 70% went to farmers and the remaining 30% went to operations. We also generated \$79,000 in CSA sales. Farmers received 50% of this and the remainder was used for farm operations. All income that did not go directly to farmers was re-invested into market programming with no net profit.

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).
 - a. Our biggest lesson learned regarded the implementation of the EBT delivery route. Due to staff changeover, we weren't able to start this project until mid-July 2016 and the middle of the growing season. However, once we had hired a full-time market manager and worked out the logistics of purchasing and setting up the EBT machine, we were able to identify and train two farmers wanting to start delivery routes. Despite starting in July, the farmer participants experienced great success with their pilot delivery routes. So much so that one farmer was directing customers to a local freezer vendor so that they could purchase a large freezer to ensure proper storage and allow them to purchase more produce. One logistical difficulty that needs to be explored more is registering EBT machines to non-profits and/or individual farmers. In order to expand this project, we would need to work closely with our EBT machine operator to ensure that any private data is not associated with the machine, but rather our Non-profit EIN number can be used in registering the machine. In addition, we'd like to expand the project to incorporate training on accepting electronic payments in general, not just EBT. This will not only increase farmer capacity to manage any kind of electronic transaction, but help diversify delivery routes and customer base.

- b. We are very pleased with the success of our farmers market stand in 2016. One thing we know would improve efficiency and better track finances would be better record keeping. This would assist farmers in developing skills in keeping harvest records, inventory lists and sales tracking. We plan to explore options for record keeping during the 2017 growing season.
- c. At the farmers market, we learned that the double up market bucks program in MN is not being used to its full capacity. We recognize how this program not only increases access to healthy food, but also increases direct to consumer sales for local farmers. We hope to explore ways to encourage more participation in this program for both farmers and consumers.
- ii. If goals or outcome measures were not achieved, identify and share the lessons learned to help others expedite problem-solving:
 - a. Due to the merger of our organization with The Food Group, this grant is not eligible for continuation. As such, we must close out our grant early. Despite not continuing this project during the 2017 growing season, we successfully accomplished all of our objectives within the first year of the funding. This accomplishment only points to the success that we anticipate for 2017. We continue to do the work outside of receiving the remainder of our funds.
- 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:
 - a. Our final grant manager with the USDA was incredibly helpful. Her guidance and patience to walk us through reporting, financial management and answer questions helped the administration of the project immensely. Without her skill and expertise we would have been lost, especially with all the financial tracking. We fully recommend building a strong and collaborative relationship with the USDA grant manager. It is helpful to recognize that they are there to help us succeed and have the resources to support us in doing just that.

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.
 - Due to our merger with the Food Group, we are no longer able to use funds for this project. However, we continue the work of following these objectives and goals for the 2017 growing season as if nothing has changed.
 - Our market manager continues to work full time developing direct-to-consumer market opportunities for farmer participants.
 - We have secured a stall at the Kingfield Market and a new one at the Mill City Farmers Market, to continue our market training program. We have a goal of increasing farmer sales to \$15,000 for the season.
 - We are actively recruiting CSA members through email, social media and events, with a goal of increasing membership to 200 (up from 167) members for 2017.
 - We are communicating with drop site hosts, tabling at drop sites and providing resources for hosts to recruit members and build our consumer base.

- We are meeting with farmers as they develop crop and market plans for the growing season and will be working with participants interested in developing delivery routes to their communities.
 - We will hire two part-time seasonal staff to manage the market stand and assist with CSA packing and delivery logistics.
 - Our goal for the 2017 season is to continue to develop our original grant objectives, while also addressing the changing needs and interests of farmer participants.
- 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?
- Expand the direct-to-consumer delivery routes working with farmer participants to better identify customers, efficient delivery routes and marketing specifically to diverse populations through radio, print and other marketing schemes.
 - Next steps would begin with communicating with farmer participants enrolled in the 2017 season to gauge interest and ability to begin designing and marketing a delivery route to their neighborhood. Once established, training in the use of the electronic payments, including EBT and in financial management.
 - Research and develop efficient record keeping providing farmers with resources and skills to evaluate market sales and determine the viability of different crops for different markets. Keeping in mind that the tools designed need to be accessible to English language learners and participants with limited computer literacy. I.e. picture based and with simple graphics/procedures.
 - Next steps would be to connect with ag-software companies and/or academic researchers who are piloting small-scale farm software that could be adapted for use in a farm training program. If their research could be staged at MFA, we could act as a pilot for their software development.
 - Research and organize for increased participation in the double up market bucks program.
 - We need to connect with the administrator of the double up program in MN/Metro area to get a handle on the rate of participation and process for managing the program. In addition, we would like to meet with farmers to discuss the potential of piloting double up programs through delivery routes, pop-up market stands and farmer consignment stores.