

FMPP Final Performance Report

Report Number/Period: (09/30/14 – 09/30/2016)
Date: 7/6/2016
Contact: Frank James/605-697-5204/fejames@dakotarural.org
Recipient Name: Dakota Rural Action
Project Title: The South Dakota Local Foods Cooperative
Improvement, Expansion and Critical Infrastructure Project
Grant Number: 14-FMPPX-SD-0155
Project Location: Brookings, SD
Total Awarded Budget: \$ 40,000

1) Objective: State the objective (or each element of the objective, if more than one) and those activities associated with each as identified in the grant agreement.

Goal #1: To expand and grow the South Dakota Local Foods Cooperative in order to increase local consumption of and access to locally grown agricultural products.

Goal #2: To improve and expand the functions of the South Dakota Local Foods Cooperative in order to make it into a critical marketing hub and component of South Dakota's local food hub and Farm to School program.

2) Summary of Activities: List each grant-funded activity that occurred during the previous six months of the project. "Activities" may be advertising, training, market start-up, recruitment, etc. Include significant contribution(s)/role(s) of project partners.

- Goal #1 – Object/Activity 1: Monthly planning calls for the 2016 SD Local Foods Conference have been taking place. This year the conference, which will take place Nov. 4th and 5th in Mitchell, SD. The SD Local Foods Co-op, the Dakota Fresh Food Hub and DRA will also be doing outreach at the conference by talking with participants, meeting producers one on one, and handing out informational materials as one of the conference sponsors. The Conference will feature a networking session for producers and buyers to connect and network with the goal of making more local purchasing possible. A session to discuss the Dakota Fresh Food Hub is also being on the agenda. Farm to School will be promoted through sessions geared toward cooking with kids and highlighting the Wagner School for their classroom activities which include an aquaponic system. SD Local Foods Co-op Producer, Dan O'Brien, will also lead a session on marketing local food products in South Dakota. The Conference also uses locally produced foods in the foods served during meals and breaks. This year the food will be sourced from various Dakota Rural Action producers and the Dakota Fresh Food Hub.
- Goal #1 – Object/Activity 2: The SD Local Foods Co-op membership is currently at 97 members in Rapid City and Spearfish, and 187 members in Brookings and Sioux Falls. The members of the Co-op recently elected their Operating Board, which includes 12

members, 6 from Rapid City and Spearfish, and 6 from Brookings and Sioux Falls. The board is made up of both buying and selling members. The duties of the board will be to address suggestions and concerns proposed by the larger membership, plan and host an annual meeting each year for members and prospective members, develop a plan to increase sales, and develop a marketing plan. The Board met in October 2015, December 2015 and March 2016. The Board is currently in the process of surveying members to find areas which are operating successfully and areas where improvements could be made. Once the survey results are gathered the Board plans to expand their marketing plan with the feedback provided. The Board is also working with the DRA Black Hills Chapter to build their membership numbers in the Black Hills.

- Goal #2 – Object/Activity 3: Members of the SD Local Foods Co-op have been participating in the planning of the Dakota Fresh Food Hub, a new local food project being planned in SD to facilitate institutional and wholesale sales of local goods within the state. The group has been meeting monthly to plan for the hub and its implementation. The hub plans to operate on the same software as the SD Local Foods Co-op, and the co-op has committed to training food hub participants on how to use the software, hosting training sessions for buyers and sellers once the hub launches, and developing a training video for future use. The co-op has also communicated with the software developer and discussed the need for possible changes. Changes in the software will be addressed as they are identified throughout planning and launching the hub. They are in the final stages of setting up their ordering website and software. Dakota Rural Action has been helping them with the website process and training hub members on the software. The hub is hoping to have the system up and running for orders in the coming weeks. The Dakota Fresh Food Hub is now incorporated, organized and taking orders without the use of the fully optimized software, which is soon to come. The Hub has hired a manager and they continue to do outreach to new buyers. They hope to expand their outreach to larger institutions like schools and hospitals next year.
- Goal #2 -- Object/Activity 4: **Info about Food Hub travel was in report #1.**
- Goal #2 -- Object/Activity 5: **Info about house meetings was in report #1.**
- Goal #2 -- Object/Activity 5: **Info about four “Meet the Farmer” Receptions was in report #2**

3) Performance: Report measurable (quantitative) results/accomplishments of each project activity during the previous six months. Examples: # of new vendors trained, increase in weekly customers, increase in baseline sales. Discuss each in relation to the specific activities of your project.

Baseline Information: Provide “before and after” measurements. (“Baseline” data compared to current data). Regularly tracking key data (e.g. vendor/customer attendance and sales, jobs created, markets created, etc.) should be a standard practice for the project and communicated/discussed within the progress reports and final report.

Co-op Sales: Oct. 2015 - Mar. 2016 = \$6,636.27

Trained seven new producers on the usage of the online system.

Project results/accomplishments:

- o Are goals being accomplished as anticipated in the proposed timeline? (Yes/No) No
- o Have there been any project changes (personnel, administrative, stakeholder involvement, unexpected circumstances, etc.) that may be impacting the pace and success of the project (Yes/No)? Yes If yes, explain.

Staff turnover on the western side of the state continues to slow some of the co-op work. Once again we have experienced a change in our organizer for the western South Dakota work on this project. Finding and holding onto qualified staff is difficult in the western side of the state, while the producer expansion continues to grow, we are still finding it hard to retain an organizer in the Rapid City office.

4) Problems and Delays: Note unexpected delays or problems for each activity. Explain what the organization did to resolve or address these issues.

None to report.

5) Financial Summary: Total amount spent during reporting period. Report any program income generated, if any, and how it was utilized. Note the reasons for budget revisions, if made, and when FMPP approval was granted.