

**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, 2014–December 30, 2016 (with granted extension)
Authorized Representative Name:	Sarah Potter
Authorized Representative Phone:	814-238-2383
Authorized Representative Email:	peacepotter@gmail.com
Recipient Organization Name:	Boalsburg Farmers Market
Project Title as Stated on Grant Agreement:	Realizing Sales Potential: A Prototype Plan to Increase Sales of Locally Produced Agricultural Products at the Boalsburg Farmers Market As a Template for Increasing Sales At Other Farmers Markets
Grant Agreement Number: <i>(e.g. 14-FMPPX-XX-XXXX)</i>	14-FMPPX-PA-0148
Year Grant was Awarded:	2014
Project City/State:	Boalsburg, PA
Total Awarded Budget:	\$28,171

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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: Lyn Garling; Email: lyn@overthemoonfarm.com; Phone: (814) 349-2697

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. For each item below, qualitatively discuss the progress made and indicate the impact on the community, if any.

Goal/Objective 1: Provide Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) recipients access to the market’s products, establishing a procedure to accept SNAP benefits and publicizing it extensively.

Progress Made: Knowing this process had many steps, we spent the first year of our grant applying for our SNAP license and doing research. During that time, we learned that we were the first farmer’s market in Centre County to accept SNAP benefits. We did find a market in a neighboring county (Huntingdon) that has a successful SNAP program; they were a great help in sharing how to prepare outreach and strong procedures for a SNAP program. In 2015 we found a suitable merchant service provider, acquired a free EBT machine through a program with the PA Dept. of Agriculture, and organized our accounting. We also hired staff to run SNAP/Debit/Credit transactions at market, do accounting, and act as a host for our newly-created Market Information Booth. Taking 2015 to get properly organized allowed the market to have a better start than if we had followed the more aggressive timeline that we had set for ourselves in our grant narrative.

From when we started accepting SNAP sales in February 2016 until our outdoor market closed in September, overall sales were not consistent, but we did develop a few regular customers. (See A1 for total number of SNAP beneficiaries and total profits.) We had positive feedback about the Market Information Booth, which was a new addition to our outdoor market. This created a welcome place to ask general market questions and purchase items using debit, credit, or SNAP. We also provided recipes, market event information, cold drinking water, and coloring for kids. Overall, the response by the community was positive, especially for the new customers that we served, as well as community members who were happy that the market was providing this option to increase access and convenience.

One major setback was the fact that the cost for SNAP staffing and paying for the machine fees totaled more than double the income that we received from both SNAP and debit/credit sales through our new machine. Only eight of our vendors used the machine for debit/credit transactions, as the remaining twenty-one had their own

machines. We will continue to research ways to improve food access in the area and communicate with other area markets about considering SNAP, as sharing SNAP fees and staff would be more cost-effective and would better serve this demographic. These conversations have been started and will hopefully gain focus in the coming year so we can ensure local food access for all.

Impact on Community: We reached out to more than sixty individuals/organizations to help spread awareness and information about our SNAP program. We visited more than twenty sites to distribute over 300 informational flyers. We had successful contact through the Meals on Wheels Program, our Facebook posts, and the County Assistance Program. There were fourteen unique SNAP customers served which generated \$431.23 in sales as outlined in the attached spreadsheet (A1).

Goal/Objective 2: Increase sales of agricultural products by increasing publicity for the market and its special programs and through education of the public and school children through cooking demonstrations and school outreach programs.

Progress Made: In 2015 we made a schedule of events for the outdoor season (see attachments section) and promoted it at the market and on our website and social media. The events were streamlined from previous years so that there was clear setup for the each type of event (list of materials provided by market, goal of event, supplies needed, etc.). Each cooking demonstration increased in popularity in 2015, but the logistics of having several different chefs commit to events was time-consuming and we were unsuccessful in reaching the goal of eight events.

In 2016 we made a couple of improvements. We increased our publicity by adding posters and flyers to our marketing campaign. These were placed around our community and available at market. We increased social media posts and the number of ads in local papers and on the radio, as well as started a weekly email campaign that grew in subscribers all season long. We prepared our calendar of events in early May—before we opened for the outdoor season—and were able to have it listed on all informational materials (posters, flyers, social media, ads, etc.). We chose to have the same cooking instructor for all events in 2016, which while logistically superior for the market, did not always garner better attendance (see impact section for more detail). Customers were generally very happy with cooking demonstrations as a place to stop by and sample delicious foods.

In 2015 and 2016 we hosted a successful chef competition that highlighted area chefs from establishments that make serving local food a priority. They prepared amazing dishes for the panel of judges, and all market goers were able to sample a variety of the foods. We had excellent press coverage before and after these events, and it is an annual favorite for many of our market customers.

In 2015 and 2016 we continued school programming with presentations by farmers in local elementary schools. This has been a part of our educational outreach since 2014.

Because of the FMPP grant and our goal of reaching a new demographic, in 2016 we decided to shift our school outreach to students in the Penguin Packs program—an important service for our State College Community. The program provides food for area school students who might not have enough to eat on the weekends when there is no school breakfast or lunch. This additional nourishment can help improve student health and learning.

Another positive impact has been Penguin Pack's relationship with the NHS school—a local school for students on the autism spectrum. Once a month NHS students help fill Penguin Packs; an opportunity that helps the NHS students learn important life skills. In November 2016 we organized cooking lessons for NHS students. Using ingredients from market, students made three different recipes and got to sample the results of their hard work. Afterward, they shared recipe cards in the forty Penguin Packs they filled. Both NHS students and Penguin Packs students also received vouchers to use at the market.

Impact on Community: While we were not able to collect attendance data for market (as we lack a single-point entrance to our market area), we do have several vendors who survey general market turnout. For them, 2015 and 2016 showed lower attendance and decreased sales than from previous years. Noting these declines and vendor dissatisfaction despite increased outreach activities, we decided to conduct a customer survey. 145 customers participated either online or at market. Results from the survey can be found in the attachment section as well as the section on community feedback.

We found that 14% of those surveyed had attended a cooking demonstration, and that half of them purchased items at the market because it was featured in the demonstration. Based on samples served, these four cooking demonstrations reached around 225 people in 2016, with the number of samples served ranging from 25 to 75. Numbers for 2015 were lower because they were seated events with less samples served. Over 200 people attended the annual chef competitions, which consistently draws a strong crowd.

The Farmer Comes to School program at area elementary schools reached 750 students in fall 2015, and Penguin Packs programing connected with 42 students in spring 2016 and 51 in fall 2016.

Outreach success is harder to measure. We increased our social media outreach significantly over the last two years and have a strong following. However, results from our survey show that the majority of patrons still get their market updates by word of mouth or attending the market every week.

Goal/Objective 3: Gain experience in how to increase the sale of local agricultural products at the Boalsburg Market to serve as a basis to expand grant activities to more farmers markets in Centre County and Pennsylvania in a FMPP grant to be

submitted in the 2015 cycle in cooperation with Buy Fresh Buy Local and the FoodRoutes Network.

Progress Made: While our first two goals were successful in most areas, this particular goal was harder to achieve. We do have a vibrant and successful market that serves our customers well, as shown by our local recognition as the “Best Farmers Market” for the last two years—no small feat, as there are six markets within a 25-mile radius each week. However, our average sales have not increased, and while the SNAP program did bring in new sales, it was not able to cover costs in its first year, making it a tough sell to other area markets. In addition, we only completed one year worth of sales for SNAP. Stronger data would have resulted from two years worth of sales and building a SNAP customer base.

In addition to our survey, we will continue to gather sales data in 2017 and communicate with other markets about how they are increasing their own sales. Some things that our market continues to excel in are public programs (cooking demos, chef competition, live music, etc.) and customer satisfaction in almost every area (diversity of product, prices, quality, etc.). One legitimate question is that with so many area markets per week with many similar vendors, are we diluting the overall market? To answer this question and others, we held a meeting in mid-2016 with other area market managers to determine their interest in working together to manage our markets, have joint advertising, and provide programs like SNAP using our collective resources. Interest was limited.

Impact on Community: A grant proposal is underway for 2017 or 2018. Working in conjunction with Central PA Community Action and our local Ensuring Access Team, we are considering filing for a Food Insecurity Nutrition Incentive (FINI) grant to expand SNAP and SNAP incentives at area markets. To make a stronger proposal and gain further insights, we hope to facilitate an area market in accepting SNAP benefits for the 2017 season.

2. Quantify the overall impact of the project on the intended beneficiaries, if applicable, from the baseline date (the start of the award performance period, September 30, 2014). Include further explanation if necessary.

- Number of direct jobs created: 0
- Number of jobs retained: 0
- Number of indirect jobs created: 0
- Number of markets expanded: 1
- Number of new markets established: 0

Market sales increased by: 2016 was our first year to successfully gather data from vendors regarding sales. We are using this data to see the overall impact our market has on the economy and our success compared with other area markets. With preliminary results from 86% of the vendors at the outdoor market, the Boalsburg Farmers Market added \$283,147.68 to the local economy in 2016. We don't have

enough data from 2015 to share a complete two-year analysis of an increase or decrease of sales. Below is a small sample of data from vendors who were willing to share data from both years. We are working to collect more 2015 vendor data.

- 6 vendors had sales decrease in 2016 between 3%-14%.
- One vendor had a 28% loss of sales over the past 4 years.
- 2 vendors have increased sales in the last year, one reporting a 15% increase.
- 4 vendors did not record or wish to share their sales.

Number of farmers/producers that have benefited from the project: The market's twenty-nine vendors benefitted from customers drawn to the market by special events and new customers utilizing SNAP benefits or debit and credit transactions.

Percent Increase: Not enough data to answer.

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?

We have expanded our customer base through our outreach to low income/low access populations with the acceptance of SNAP benefits, as well as outreach to area families that are a part of the Penguin Packs program. We also made new connections with area businesses and non-profits because of the SNAP program.

3. Discuss your community partnerships.

Who are your community partners?

- Spring Creek Homesteading Fund – Our non-profit partner for the SNAP program.
- Food Access Group (Ensuring Access Team) – Working to increase access to good food in our community for all. Supporting SNAP and SNAP expansion to other markets as well as educational outreach.
- Buy Fresh, Buy Local (part of Pennsylvania Association for Sustainable Agriculture) – Partners in local outreach/advertisements and local foods week activities like the Golden Basket chef competition.
- Pennsylvania Military Museum – A close partner that we lease our outdoor market space from. We have a good relationship with the museum and they were willing to work with us to install a permanent market sign on their site in 2016.
- State College Area School District & Penguin Packs – Local school district whom we partner with to present educational programs on local food and farms. The district also partners with Penguin Packs to offer food to children who have limited access to food over the weekends.
- Local-focused chefs & The Southern Allegheny Chefs Association – Partners in promoting events, purchasing food from our vendors, and participating in cooking demonstrations and our annual Golden Basket chef competition.

How have they contributed to the overall results of the FMPP project? *See above.*

How will they continue to contribute to your project's future activities, beyond the performance period of this FMPP grant?

- Spring Creek Homesteading Fund will be taking on the future of SNAP at community markets. They are holders of the SNAP account and will work to encourage the transition of SNAP to another market if Boalsburg Farmers Market decides not to continue the program in Spring 2017.
- Food Access Group, with the help of members from Boalsburg Farmers Market, will create and compile documents to share with other local markets about SNAP and SNAP incentive programs.
- Buy Fresh, Buy Local will continue to offer weekly advertising for our program. However, their program has been decreased and so they were not able to provide as many resources in late 2016. We will not be partnering with this group for a grant proposal as they do not have the staff resources at this time.
- Pennsylvania Military Museum we will continue to be the site for our outdoor market between May-November—a great location that has served us well for over a dozen years.
- State College Area School District & Penguin Packs – We touch base with the school district each fall and spring to see what programming needs they have that the market could support. They received a grant in 2016 for their great work in school gardens and local food initiatives. Penguin Packs is hoping to expand their program to other area schools and would like to purchase more local foods from area markets to send home in their weekend food packs.
- Local-focused chefs & The Southern Allegheny Chefs Association – Promoting the market and purchasing foods from the market for their restaurants, as well as participating in public events hosted by the Boalsburg Farmers Market.

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

As discussed in previous reports, the Grant Administrator was hired to monitor grant activities and work with other hired staff to make sure that goals were reached by providing funding needs and access to materials and resources. The SNAP Benefits Coordinator was hired to prepare a SNAP program, carry out day-to-day operations of SNAP at market, host our Market Information Booth, and keep track of SNAP accounts. The Publicity Coordinator was responsible for maintaining and expanding outreach opportunities for the market. A major focus was to share about our new SNAP program and events at market. In order to carry out these events we also contracted with a rental company for materials (tents and cooking equipments) as well as working with area chefs. Finally, we hired help for our website updates.

5. *Have you publicized any results yet? If yes, how did you publicize the results? To whom did you publicize the results? How many stakeholders (i.e. people,**

entities) did you reach? **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).*

Not yet.

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

If so, how did you collect the information? We conducted a survey in October 2016. 145 customers participated either online or at market.

What feedback was relayed (specific comments)? See attachments section (A2).

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? Yes.

If yes, how much was generated and how was it used to further the objectives of the award?

\$891.08 was earned through SNAP sales and debit/credit transactions that were made possible through the acquisition of an EBT machine via the work of the grant. These profits went to market vendors and will further the work of the grant by allowing vendors to see the benefits of supporting a SNAP benefits program at Boalsburg and/or other area markets.

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).

Positive Experiences:

- Streamlining cooking demos—one chef per season with focus on simple, healthy meal options.
- Smaller number of chefs for chef competition—focus on quality event, not quantity.
- Increased communication about ideas for outreach led to proposal of an advisory team that includes vendors and customers.

- Tracking sales data for the entire market will allow us to see changes in market and make correlations to the many variables that affect outdoor market sales (weather, programming, location, time/day of market, etc.) Our survey was a valuable resource of customer feedback.
- Partnering with small organizations that increase food access (like Penguin Packs) was a win-win situation.
- Serving customers that have little access to fresh, local produce. One of our SNAP customers visited our market 13 different weeks during the course of the outdoor season.

Negative Experiences:

- SNAP programs are a challenge to set up for the first time and extensive research should be done to make sure that you can serve that demographic well at your market, including a plan for how to successfully publicize and draw in SNAP customers.
- Lacking organization with other area markets does not allow us to share resources and may be diluting our markets.

If goals or outcome measures were not achieved, identify and share the lessons learned to help others expedite problem-solving. Describe any lessons learned in the administration of the project that might be helpful for others who would want to implement a similar project:

- Be realistic about a timeline. There was some misunderstanding about the timing of the grant period, as well as how long it would take for parts of the goals to unfold. Do your research first so that you can be better prepared in the implementation period.
- Make sure there is a strong support network (ideally the people who write the grant would maintain involvement and sit on this committee) for the objectives of the grant, and create a grant committee to oversee the work of the grant and support the various tasks, including hiring of grant employees.

Future Work: 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.

A major objective of the grant was to see a SNAP program get started at our market. While that did happen, it was achieved in the second year of the grant and run for only 8 months; not enough time for a true measure of success. The downfalls of the program, including not enough consistent sales/clientele and pay of the SNAP employee outweighing income to the market, has caused the board to postpone SNAP

sales at this time. However, there are several people in the community and some vendors who still like the idea of SNAP being available at other area markets, if not our own. Therefore it is an objective of the market to help make SNAP access a reality at one or more Centre county markets. If we are able to do that, there would be increased sales, more customers served, and a permanent job created to serve this clientele at market information booths. We will be preparing a packet of SNAP resources that outline a timeline, start-up budget, and outreach and incentive ideas. There are many resources available already, so we will be pulling from these excellent tools; in particular the SNAP guide for Farmers Markets from the Farmers Market Coalition. After creating this SNAP packet, we hope to meet with other market boards to share the document, answer questions, and provide start-up help.

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?

The recommendations for the Boalsburg Farmers Market are as follows:

- Continue to host educational programming for the community: a) a set number of cooking demonstrations that highlight how to cook healthy, simple dishes; b) an annual chef competition; c) improving the “meeting place” aspect of the market for more in-market dining and enjoyment; and d) staying involved in school outreach programs for children with food assistance such as Penguin Packs.
- Encourage more joint planning with other area markets and be willing to share successes and failures to see if there are overarching patterns that could be addressed by more organization of the six local markets.
- Encourage the sharing of a joint position for market information booth staff that could also run SNAP transactions. This would allow SNAP to be picked up by multiple markets.
- Develop a Farmers Market Advisory Board that includes vendors, market administrators, and community members/customers. This group would help to plan marketing goals, public events, review customer feedback, and set new goals for the market.

Attachments:

A1: Boalsburg Market SNAP Profit Final Report 2016

A2: 2016 Customer Survey Results

2015 Events

June 23 – Cooking Demonstration

July 7 – Cooking Demonstration

July 21– Cooking Demonstration

August 4 – Local Foods Week/Golden Basket Chef Competition

August 18 – Potluck Picnic for Public (5-7pm) with Music for Kids

August 26 – Plow to Plate Dinner

Fall – School Programs in Elementary Schools & Presentation at Conference on
“Farmer Goes to School” Program

2016 Events

May – Penguin Packs Program

May 3 – Cooking Demonstration

June 14 – Cooking Demonstration

July 12 – Cooking Demonstration

August 2 – Local Foods Week/Golden Basket Chef Competition

August 9 – Cooking Demonstration

November – Penguin Packs Program/Cooking Demonstrations for NHS students