

## Farmers Market Promotion Program FMPP: Final Performance Report

**Report Date Range:** September 30th, 2014 – September 29<sup>th</sup>, 2016

**Authorized Representative Name:** Jan Joannides

**Authorized Representative Phone:** 612-251-7304

**Authorized Representative Email:** jan@rtcinfo.org

**Recipient Organization Name:** Renewing the Countryside II

**Project Title as Stated on Grant Agreement:** *Increasing farm to consumer connections through on-farm events and food service: Technical assistance & marketing resources.*

**Grant Agreement Number:** 14-FMPPX-MN-0093

**Year Grant was Awarded:** 2014

**Project City/State:** Minneapolis, MN

**Total Awarded Budget:** \$98,044

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).

### **1. State the goals/objectives of your project as outlined in the grant narrative and/or approved by FMPP staff.**

The goal of this project focused on increasing and diversifying revenues for farms in Minnesota and Wisconsin by expanding agritourism offerings that incorporate local foods. The objectives included: 1) provide farmers with the training and resources they need to develop and/or expand on-farm events and food service; 2) aggressively promote travel experiences that integrate purchasing products or experiences directly from farmers; 3) expand tools to help consumers easily find on-farm, food-centered agritourism opportunities. This project resulted in increased domestic consumption of agricultural products and experiences. It also cultivated an understanding of on farm food service among farmers eager to develop new market opportunities for their operations.

More than 350 farmers increased their understanding of on farm food service. Based on the survey that 21 of the participants completed at the end of the grant period, 21 of farmers who completed the survey indicated that they added or expanded on farm food service in their options which, based on the survey completed at the end of the grant period translates to over \$60,000 in additional revenue, 24 jobs retained and 7 full or part-time jobs added by these farmers.

**Objective 1: *Give farmers training and assistance to diversify their operations to include on-farm food service, such as pizza farms or farm to table dinners.***

Activity A: On farm food service manual, Come and Get It, developed for Wisconsin

The Wisconsin version of the On-Farm Food Service Manual, Come and Get It (34 pages), was developed that included a section addressing regulation of the production facility itself including license types (food facility permits, temporary food establishment permits, and retail

food permits), license obligations, maintaining licenses, working with inspectors, understanding when an event becomes regulated.

Additionally, a chapter was completed that discussed legal issues and risk management surrounding food service as a farm component, including sales tax, employment law, zoning, food safety liability, injury liability, and choosing a business entity.

**Impact:** To date, over 500 copies of Come and Get It have been either distributed (print) or downloaded from the Renewing the Countryside website. We have also had inquiries from other states interested in creating their own state-specific versions, including Illinois and Iowa.

#### Activity B: Workshops and webinars for farm operations with on farm food service

A 1.5 hour workshop was developed that provided an overview of options, considerations, and helpful resources for on farm food service. This core workshop, with variations including either a panel of farmers engaged in on farm food service and/or case studies, was presented at 17 farm conferences (See Question #6/Results Publicized for full conference listing). Live workshops were offered for both WI (4/21/15) and MN (4/22/15) in a webinar format as well as being archived online for on-going use by farmers. Each webinar was offered in Wisconsin and Minnesota, due to the differences in how the two states treated on farm food service from a regulatory standpoint.

**Impact:** The workshop presented at the 17 conferences added up to over 1,500 on-target farmers. Based on data collected by Farm Commons, the Wisconsin webinar received 77 farmer participants and the Minnesota webinar received 94 farmer participants. Additionally, the webinars have been accessed 195 times since their archiving at FarmCommons.org.

#### Activity C: On farm food service field day trainings

Two field day trainings (4 hours each) were completed at Stoney Acres Farm (Wisconsin) on 8/22/15 and DreamAcres Farm (Minnesota) on 8/15/15.

**Impact:** Our goal was to reach 30 farmers at each field days and we were slightly off for the Minnesota Day with 25 attendees and over for the Wisconsin day with 35 attendees. Most attendees came from farms in Minnesota and Wisconsin, but some ranged as far as Iowa and Michigan. The opportunity for attendees to ask questions to successful farmers in a non-threatening, open environment was very well received:

*"I came with a list of questions and got all of them answered and now I can get my CSA member dinners up and running this summer. The opportunity to ask questions in such a safe and non-judgmental environment really boosted my confidence."*

Kriss Marion, Circle M Market Farm (Blanchardville, WI)

#### Activity D: Technical Assistance to Farmers interested in On Farm Food Service provided in "Bootcamp" Format

Expanded from the original grant proposal, we tested a "Bootcamp" format of delivering technical assistance in which ten total farmers participated in an overnight at Inn Serendipity

Farm and B&B while receiving intense coaching from Lisa Kivirist and John Ivanko/JDI Enterprises. Rachel Armstrong/Farm Commons attended or Skyped into each session as an additional resource.

**Impact:** The Boot Camps gave farmers opportunity to dig deeper into their business vision, ask questions and further develop their next steps. We would definitely consider such a format again, especially considering the strong farmer response:

*"I just started a bakery business and rent a commercial kitchen, but have visions of potentially building an on-farm kitchen in the future. This Boot Camp session gave me the opportunity to ask specific questions related to my needs in a supportive setting, which was very enlightening and helpful. I now have a clearer vision of what challenges might lie ahead and have a deeper understanding of the right questions to ask."*

Danielle Sullivan, Keewaydin Organic Farm (Viola, WI)

*"The boot-camp approach is a great idea for helping to develop dreams into realistic plans or, in our case, to refocus plans. We were floating high in the sky on the idea of an on-farm pizza night, as is becoming a trend among small farms. Our suburban-exurban setting seemed ideal. However, after discussing the rules and regulations during our time at the boot camp, we were brought down to earth. We think the intimate atmosphere of the boot camp helped us focus on the details that ultimately brought about our change of mind and consider other options. The boot camp is a great winnowing activity for ideas."*

David Kozlowski & Sandra Raduenz, Pinehold Gardens (Oak Creek, WI)

*"The on-farm Boot Camp session helped us tremendously to think through and further develop and refine our on-farm business ideas into something tangible and concrete. Thanks to the strategic insight and support from both the legal and business perspectives, we have a much clearer vision for an on-farm burger concept that would use our meat products and now feel it is something we could launch sooner than later, potentially even this summer."*

Stephanie & Andy Schneider, Together Farms (Mondovi, WI)

#### Activity E: Provide networking opportunities for farmers interested in on farm food service

A webpage was developed by Farm Commons and Renewing the Countryside that included the On Farm Food Service manuals, archived webinars and other resources, located at: Online at [http://www.renewingthecountryside.org/on\\_farm\\_food\\_service](http://www.renewingthecountryside.org/on_farm_food_service)

**Impact:** Website exceeded traffic target of 1,000 unique visitors and resulted in more than 1,650 unique page views and more than 2,210 page visits.

A peer-to-peer listserv (via Google groups) was created, with posts made by various members of the team. There were 24 people signed up for the service, but lower numbers suggest a lack of interest in this format of information sharing among busy farmers.

**Objective 2: Drive customers to participate in on-farms food service offerings through a creative and strategic marketing**

Activity A: Develop marketing materials and campaign

The gist of the campaign: *Love good food? Planning a trip in Minnesota or Wisconsin? Let us help you find places where you can connect with local farms: farm-to-table dinners, pizza farms, locally-grown festivals, and culinary vacations.* Written vignettes were completed for twelve on farm food service operations in Wisconsin and Minnesota, six in each state. Photos were also collected. Each of these vignettes were then featured in twelve special additions of the Authentic Traveler which is sent to 6,000 to 9,000 people with open rates an impressive 15% to 25%.

Additionally, article pitches were made to regional media about on farm food service, featuring press releases and vignettes. Social media efforts included weekly posts on Facebook and Twitter. The use of Twitter replaced Instagram, due to potential increased media interest in using Twitter for “news stories.” A radio sponsorship campaign was purchased both on Minnesota and Wisconsin Public Radio.

**Impact:** Emails were sent throughout 2015 and 2016 using vignettes provided and destination profiles that we generated. For ease of viewing and production quality, only photos were used.

We saw strong media coverage generated by this project, including the National Public Radio piece (8/19/15), “Family Farms Turn To Pizza For Fast Cash And Customers” which featured program field day host, Stoney Acres Farm.

Additional media include:

MOSES Organic Broadcaster (March/April 2015); Circulation almost 12,000 (pdf attached)  
Feature Article: *New training program helps farmers start farm-based food services*  
<https://mosesorganic.org/farm-based-food-services/>

Grit Magazine (Sept/Oct 2016); Circulation 150,000 (pdf attached)  
Article: *Farm-to-Table Fare: Four steps to serving food right on your farm*  
Feature article showcasing program

Soil Sisters: A Toolkit for Women Farmers (Book release Feb 2016), by Lisa Kivirist  
Feature of program and Kat Becker/Stoney Acres Farm

GROWING: For Fruits and Vegetable Growers Magazine  
Article featuring C&GI scheduled for 2017 (Reaches more than 20,000 commercial growers)

Renewing the Countryside posted about the project on Facebook and Twitter, but not Instagram. Posts were not, however, weekly, especially in the off season.

Perhaps as a result of the media coverage and advertising as well as social media campaign, there were 2,700 new sign ups in 2015 & 2016 for Authentic Traveler, which includes those from the Renewing the Countryside booth at the Minnesota State Fair. While falling short of the goal of 4,000 people interested in on farm food service experiences, this short fall could be accounted for, in part, due to the delay of the website launch and integration into GreenRoutes.org.

**Objective 3: Expand online tools to help consumers easily find on-farm, food-centered agritourism opportunities.**

Drawing on the success of Green Routes, we developed an interactive website that enables the public to easily find on-farm food service offerings. Farms offering on farm food service were included, along with a calendar of upcoming events, search box and an interactive map. Impact: Without a question, most travelers go to the web for information than any other singular source. Leveraging the success, reputation and traffic of the Green Routes website, we could use this connected platform to focus on on-farm food service opportunities in a cost-effective manner. The website is online and fully integrated into greenroutes.org. <http://greenroutes.org/come-get-it/> or <http://greenroutes.org/places/farm-food/> Since its launch, the average monthly site traffic has grown to over 1,400 sessions from 1000 users and more than 3,500 page views.

**2. Quantify the overall impact of the project on the intended beneficiaries based on the survey completed at the end of the grant period:**

Of the participating farms who completed the survey, 21 added or expanded their on farm food service activities, as detailed in the following summary.

After learning about the opportunities related to on farm food service, which of the following have you pursued (check all that apply)?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
On farm potluck	28.6%	6
On farm culinary event for your CSA members	14.3%	3
On farm "dinner on the farm" type event (with outside caterer)	23.8%	5
On farm wedding or special event (with outside caterer)	14.3%	3
Pizza Farm Business	28.6%	6
None	38.1%	8
Other (fill in blank)	38.1%	8
<i>answered question</i>		21
<i>skipped question</i>		0

i. Number of direct jobs created: 20 part-time employees and 1 full time employee

If you pursued any on farm food service activities, approximately how many new employees were needed to be able to accomplish these activities over the past two years?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
No new employees	46.2%	6
1 part-time employee	23.1%	3
2 - 4 part-time employees	15.4%	2
5 or more part time employees	7.7%	1
1 full time employee	7.7%	1
2 full time employees	0.0%	0
3 or more full time employees	0.0%	0
<i>answered question</i>		13
<i>skipped question</i>		8

ii. Number of jobs retained: 24 (based on data collected in the survey of participating farms)

iii. Number of indirect jobs created: Not applicable

iv. Number of markets expanded: Not applicable

v. Number of new markets established: Numerous new customers were attracted as a part of on farm food service activities, as evidenced by the survey results below.

If you pursued any on farm food service activities, were your markets or customers expanded over the past two years to include any of the following new groups (check all that apply)?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Customers who did not buy any farm products before	75.0%	9
Urban/suburban customers who came out to the farm for the first time	66.7%	8
Local residents who came out to the farm for the first time	75.0%	9
New customers that were younger than my core customers	33.3%	4
New customers that were older than my core customers	25.0%	3
New customers who also had children	58.3%	7
New customers who were multi-generational	58.3%	7
New customers who were not my typical customers (ethnicity, Other	58.3%	7
<i>answered question</i>		12
<i>skipped question</i>		9

vi. Market sales increased by: While the project did not have a baseline from which to work; however, based on the farms participating in the survey, more than \$60,000 in farm revenue was realized as a result of new or expanded on farm food service, with several farms making

significant expansion efforts. The following shares the scope of the additional revenue.

If you pursued any on farm food service activities, approximately how much additional revenue was generated on your farm thanks to these activities over the past two years? Please note "additional"		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Less than \$300	35.7%	5
\$301 - \$500	14.3%	2
\$501 - \$2,000	7.1%	1
\$2,001 - \$5,000	0.0%	0
\$5,001 - \$10,000	7.1%	1
\$10,001 or more	35.7%	5
<i>answered question</i>		14
<i>skipped question</i>		7

vii. Number of farmers/producers that have benefited from the project: 350  
 Percent Increase: 100% (as this was an entirely new program)

**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?**

From the farmer participant perspective, to ensure that farmers of all economic backgrounds could attend the Field Days, scholarships were offered to any farmer who needed one. While farms engaged in on-farm food service did see their business grow, the capacity of this project did not survey customer populations. We plan to and are currently applying for additional funding to do this in future as such research data would be very helpful to farmer business planning.

**4. Discuss your community partnerships.**

i. Who are your community partners?

Renewing the Countryside and the Minnesota Institute for Sustainable Agriculture (MISA) were the two key community partners who led the creation of the On Farm Food Service Manual. We also tapped into a network of experts including farmers, university faculty, and employees at MN and WI state health and agriculture departments, who served as reviewers and advisors for the manual.

Additionally, this project involved a strong network of partner groups who greatly supported this effort, including two experienced pizza-farms, DreamAcres and Stoney Acres; and several farming organizations such as Midwest Organic and Sustainable Education Service (MOSES), The Land Stewardship Project, Sustainable Farmers of Wisconsin Farmers Union and others.

ii. How have they contributed to the overall results of the FMPP project?

The diverse set of skill sets and experience from RTC and our Partners greatly impacted the success of this project. MISA offered its considerable experience in expertise publishing and promoting the manual. Our advisors contributed to the accuracy of the manual and training

materials. The partner farms lend authenticity to the program and can “walk the talk” when working participants farmers.

Above all, RTC’s extensive network of additional partner groups helped us amplify outreach and awareness of this project through articles and announcements in various newsletters and materials and the opportunity to present at these organizations various conferences.

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

All of the groups collaboratively involved continue to work with a variety of farmer groups (beginning, established, etc.) on a regular basis and support outreach for this project. For example, Lisa Kivirist also works with MOSES and directs their Rural Women’s Project, providing women farmer training. She regularly speaks at women-farmer focused venues on diversification and readily continues outreach for the program.

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

Two contractors were used. The first, Lisa Kivirist and John Ivanko at JDI Enterprises, have been providing advice and resources for small, diversified farms for over a dozen years. They come to this role from personal experience, as they live on a small farm in southern Wisconsin where they run a diversified operation and Bed & Breakfast, Inn Serendipity. Lisa and John regularly present at farming workshops across the country and have written several books, including *Homemade for Sale*, *Farmstead Chef*, *ECOpreneur* and *Rural Renaissance*. Recently, they has been active in getting a Cottage Foods bill in front of the Wisconsin legislature and has done extensive research on farm food service.

Thanks to JDI Enterprises, in addition to the specific deliverables completed by this contractor, its owner was able to secure articles in *Grit* magazine, the *MOSES Organic Broadcaster*. *GRPOWING* and a feature in Lisa’s new book, *Soil Sisters: A Toolkit for Women Farmers*.

The second contractor was Rachel Armstrong of Farm Commons, a board-certified attorney. Rachel developed the resources, conducted trainings, and provided technical assistance to farmers. Her deciphering complex rules and regulations and translating them into language that everyone can understand helped craft a very accessible and understandable manual and materials

**6. Results Publicized**

- i. If yes, how did you publicize the results?
- ii. To whom did you publicize the results?
- iii. How many stakeholders (i.e. people, entities) did you reach?

Results of this project have been publicized in two key ways:

- 1) In the *Authentic Traveler*, sent to more than 6,000 people

2) At conferences in which the community partners or contractors present.

***Over 1,500 on-target farmers attended workshops where the Come & Get It program was presented***, with an estimated over 60% of these attendees being women farmers.

- MOSES Organic Conference (Feb. 26-28, 2015); LaCrosse, WI; Workshop; 275 attendance
- In Her Boots: Sustainable Agriculture For Women, By Women (summer, 2015)  
On-farm workshop with Agritourism breakout session; 60+ women farmer attendees
- Women, Food & Agriculture Network (WFAN) Conference (Nov. 6-7, 2015); Davenport, IA  
Workshop; 100+ workshop attendees
- CSA Midwest Conference (Dec. 3-4, 2015); Eau Claire, WI  
Workshop & resource table; 125 workshop attendees, over 300 conference attendees total  
Co-presented with d Becker & Tony Schultz (Stoney Acres Farm) who run a successful pizza farm; Kat, Tony, Lisa & John also served as “ask an expert” resources for one-on-one consulting.
- EcoFarm (Jan. 21, 2016); Pacific Grove, CA  
Workshop; 150 workshop attendees (all women farmers)
- Wisconsin Farmers Union Convention (Jan. 29, 2016); Appleton, WI  
Presented at pre-conference session on Agritourism; 50 attendees
- MOSES Organic Conference (Feb. 26-27, 2016); LaCrosse, WI  
Workshop; One of the conference’s top 10 attended workshops: 305 attendees
- FamilyFarmed (March 25-26, 2016); Chicago, IL  
Exhibitor booth with resources; 5,000+ attendance (whole event)
- In Her Boots: Sustainable Agriculture For Women, By Women (summer, 2016)  
Agritourism breakout sessions/exhibitor table and five different on-farm workshops (WI, MN, IN, IL); Over 250 women total attended, primarily beginning farmers
- New Farmer U (Oct. 21-23); Lanesboro, MN  
“Ask An Expert Session with technical assistance; 75 workshop attendees
- Women, Food & Agriculture Network (WFAN) Conference (Nov. 4-5, 2016); Nebraska City, NE  
Workshop; 100+ workshop attendances
- Penn Women in Agriculture Network (PA WaGN) Symposium (Dec. 6); State College, PA  
Workshop; 100+ attendees
- National Farmers Union: Growing for the Future (Beginning Farmer & Rancher Virtual Online Conference) (Dec. 5-8); Workshop; Estimated: Over 800 currently registered

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

Not applicable: Not a specific community based project. However, we did receive unsolicited comments from farmers desiring additional trainings and content for new states.

**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 project income was generated (not part of plan)

## 9. Lessons Learned:

This project in particular helped beginning farmers start to develop ideas and understand the complexity and expense of the regulatory and start-up process before taking on significant time and dollar investment. Giving farmers the opportunity to talk one-on-one with experts was very well received: *"I thought the discussion we had with Rachel was absolutely amazing. We don't know exactly what direction we are heading in but we are exploring lots of things and gathering lots of information. This is great a service you are providing to newbies like us."*  
Betty Anderson (Brodhead, WI)

i. If goals or outcome measures were not achieved, identify and share the lessons learned to help others expedite problem-solving:

All the project goals or outcome measures were exceeded. One important variable to recognize is that some farmers chose NOT to start a farm food service activity based on their understanding of what is involved in doing so. This understanding was invaluable, helping to maintain the profitability of these farming enterprises and prevent haphazard or possibly costly investments that may not have achieved the anticipated results.

ii. Describe any lessons learned in the administration of the project that might be helpful for others who would want to implement a similar project:

We originally planned for farmers to first read the manual and then participate in the webinar; however, we found the opposite to happen. The webinar proved to be a good overview snapshot of the information and an efficient means for farmers to "dip a toe" in the on farm food service arena to see if might be of interest. After that it made sense for farmers to dig deeper and read the manual, attend a field day, etc.

## 9. Future Work:

i. How will you continue the work of this project beyond the performance period? How will you parlay the results of your project's work to benefit future community goals & initiatives?

Through this project, we created a template of tools that other states can collaboratively use and adapt. As each state's regulations are different yet share some general overall similarities and protocol, the Come & Get It Project will boost these new project forward as they no longer need to start at ground zero.

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?

Demand for on-farm food service training will continue to grow as the market evolves. One key area for future activities is training to help farmers develop specific menus that both showcase their farm-raised fare yet fit more readily into state regulations, as Pizza Farms do because they only serve one simple menu item. What's the next Pizza Farm? Burgers in the barn? Taco night on the farm? Farmers need guidance in navigating these options.