

## Local Food Promotion Program (LFPP) Final Performance Report

The final performance report summarizes the outcome of your LFPP award objectives. As stated in the LFPP Terms and Conditions, you will not be eligible for future LFPP or Farmers Market 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 LFPP 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 LFPP staff to avoid delays:

LFPP Phone: 202-720-2731; Email: [USDALFPPQuestions@ams.usda.gov](mailto:USDALFPPQuestions@ams.usda.gov); Fax: 202-720-0300

Should you need to mail your documents via hard copy, contact LFPP staff to obtain mailing instructions.

<b>Report Date Range:</b> <i>(e.g. September 30, 20XX-September 29, 20XX)</i>	Sept 30, 2014 – Dec 31, 2016
<b>Authorized Representative Name:</b>	Catherine Moore
<b>Authorized Representative Phone:</b>	(315) 788-8450
<b>Authorized Representative Email:</b>	Cmm17@cornell.edu
<b>Recipient Organization Name:</b>	Cornell Cooperative Extension Association of Jefferson County
<b>Project Title as Stated on Grant Agreement:</b>	Growing to Meet the Market (GMM)
<b>Grant Agreement Number:</b> <i>(e.g. 14-LFPPX-XX-XXXX)</i>	14LFPPX-NY-0128
<b>Year Grant was Awarded:</b>	2014
<b>Project City/State:</b>	Watertown, NY
<b>Total Awarded Budget:</b>	\$99,948

LFPP 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: \_\_\_\_\_

According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, an agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB control number. The valid OMB control number for this information collection is 0581-0287. The time required to complete this information collection is estimated to average 4 hours per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, and where applicable sex, marital status, or familial status, parental status religion, sexual orientation, genetic information, political beliefs, reprisal, or because all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program (not all prohibited bases apply to all programs). Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TDD). To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call (800) 795-3272 (voice) or (202) 720-6382 (TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

1. State the goals/objectives of your project as outlined in the grant narrative and/or approved by LFPP 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 production of all meats by 10% with a long range goal of 25% in five years.

a. Progress Made: Significant gains have been made in production locally above the USDA reported Cattle Inventory of 2 %. It is difficult to quantify across all three counties except through those farmers we have worked with. Farmers participating in the CSA plan to expand sales by 25 % or greater and have brought on new producers to increase the variety of meat products to include pork and chicken. This, of course, is dependent on the continued success of the CSA. Other farmers surveyed in past LFPP reports continue to report an expectation to increase herd size.

In response to the Livestock Conference numerous producers reported an intent to increase production citing both USDA inspected and bulk sales/custom cut demand increases. Two producers have indicated they are increasing beef and/or pork production due to identified affordable freezer space. This allows them to hold product longer and market lesser prime cuts. For these farmers increasing herd size is a reasonable risk now that the time frame they have to market their product is indefinite. The Livestock Conference also created connections between restaurants and consumers and producers although how much this will impact long term increases in meat production is uncertain.

One producer is investigating investing in a high-end charcuterie business. There are no charcuterie businesses in Northern New York other than a few local lines of sausage/bologna. He is currently developing a business plan and attending training opportunities to evaluate the feasibility of this business concept.

Meat Suite is probably the most difficult to evaluate since sales are made directly between producer and consumer and the producer may not ask how the consumer learned about them. We have surveyed approximately 20% of our producers using MeatSuite.com to evaluate the effectiveness of this method. Many of the producers to date report an uptick in interest and calls but most report no noticeable increase in sales. We are continuing to boost consumer awareness of MeatSuite.com. Watertown frequently shows up as the top ten city in the quarterly Google analytics. This means that of all people visiting MeatSuite, many are from Watertown. Ongoing marketing has been supported through Tompkins County CCE to those counties that have high success rates in recruiting producer participation. Jefferson County has the highest total number of farmers using MeatSuite.com in NYS and has received additional funding to market to consumers. This small amount of funding is paying for radio ads and for an ad to be placed on our Local Food Guide which is distributed to over 35,000 homes.

Technical assistance specifically around beef and small ruminant quality assurance has resulted in improvements beyond increased production. More consistent, quality carcasses, improved livestock health and nutrition, reduced use of antibiotics and reduced shrinkage from transportation stress are all benefits from ongoing education and technical assistance provided in conjunction with this project. CCE's education and technical assistance has far exceeded MTM goals with ongoing workshops and farm visits, inclusion of Cornell University resources, the Livestock Conference and other producer/consumer education opportunities.

Betsy Hodge, who was partly funded through this project, coordinated significant technical assistance and education around small ruminants. She was especially effective in improving herd health and increasing production reflecting a growing interest from both producers and consumers in the lamb market. Over the timeframe of this project she coordinated well over 1,000 head of lamb going to market. Ongoing FAMACHA parasite trainings, soil health and pasture walks were also conducted resulting in improved herd health/productivity. Her education crossed over beyond producers and she offered numerous classes around lamb cutting, cooking and preparation for both the producer and consumer. An increased interest and sales of lamb locally is the result.

- b. Impact on Community: There are a number of impacts on the community. Among the producer community there is greater understanding of local markets and methods to assess, market and sell to local consumers. Producers have increased skill sets to improve herd health, meat quality, herd productivity and profitability. New tools are available to these producers such as networking with consumers, production models, access to markets, calculating production costs and increased freezer locker capacity and business models including the use of CSA's to direct market to local consumers.

Local consumers have increased awareness of how they can and why they may choose to buy locally produced meats. There is greater understanding among the local producer about quality and animal welfare issues encouraging purchasing locally grown meats and how to access these markets. Consumers are more aware of food safety regulations and production methods of locally grown meats. Consumers have a raised awareness of charcuterie and high end use of meats as well as bulk buying for economy.

- ii. Goal/Objective 2: Will enhance and expand efficiencies of a USDA local slaughter facility.
- a. Progress Made: As reported in previous interim reports the facility identified in this project continues to run most days at max capacity. As noted before our Advisory Committee identified adequate freezer space as a limitation and as a result we have secured local locker freezer space with this funding. This

enhances efficiencies for both the slaughter facility and growers. The slaughter facility is no longer limited in production by its own freezer space or obstructed by customers delayed in picking up product due to lack of freezer capacity. We have a number of producers who are paying for their own locker space. The CSA freezer locker space has been secured through this funding. The plan is for the producers to transition to private pay as that use is depleted.

b. Impact on Community: Adequate USDA slaughter facilities remain a serious question and potential hindrance to the growth and marketability of local meat in the North Country.

Although marketing opportunities have grown for producers, we still lack USDA processing facilities in our area especially for producers who want to process organically or who have poultry or lamb. Due to this limitation and despite the growth in local markets most of our beef producers feel their best option continues to be to raise their livestock to specifications of finishers and their end use customers. This utilizes the North Country's best resources (pasture, water, inexpensive land and facilities). Opportunities are growing for this segment of the meat business. Ultimate buyers are Whole Foods, Meyers Natural Meats, Adirondack Grazers, etc. These products can be found locally in our chain and specialty supermarkets. Premiums can be paid based on certain protocols set forth by finisher and their customers. Examples of "value added" can be grass fed, all natural, organic, religious (Halal, Kosher), lean and grass fed-grain finished. This project concludes that there is room for growth in both sides of the meat industry and both have value in bringing local meat to the local consumer using strategies that are profitable for the producer.

iii. Goal/Objective 3: The original goal/objective was to develop a sustainable cooperative business model by organizing producers. This was modified to exploring a multi-farm CSA and MeatSuite.com a Cornell Cooperative Extension created online bulk meat marketing platform.

a. Progress Made: Both these projects were highly successful with 30 farms signed up on MeatSuite.com and the first run of the CSA selling over 450 lbs of meat to 11 shares. The plan is to run another round for the CSA in April and expand to include pork, chicken and eggs and increase shares. The goal is to reach 3-4 runs per year (spring, summer fall and winter). We continue to market these opportunities to local consumers through TV, radio, and print.

b. Impact on Community: The community now has multiple ways to access local meats. Educational resources have been offered that focus on buying in bulk and making economical use of local meats. Print, radio and TV spots have provided outreach to populations that include low income audiences to encourage access to local meats.

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.
  - i. Number of direct jobs created: 5
  - ii. Number of jobs retained: 5
  - iii. Number of indirect jobs created: 1
  - iv. Number of markets expanded: 40+
  - v. Number of new markets established: 10
  - vi. Market sales for the CSA increased by over \$3,500. Cannot calculate percent as starting point is 0. The original goal was \$5,000 but this is expected to be reached by the 2<sup>nd</sup> CSA "run".
  - vii. Number of farmers/producers that have benefited from the project: 325
    - a. Percent Increase: 16% from last count of 280 producers.
  
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? We increased our producer base with the Livestock Conference which brought producers from the 3 county area and beyond that had not participated with our earlier programs. Our outreach through marketing/media has reached a broad but number of consumers contacts. We know our outreach via media projections total well over 284,735 contacts. This does not include our own Facebook, and website contacts.
  
4. Discuss your community partnerships.
  - i. Who are your community partners? Our Advisory Committee members, Midway International (freezer space), Red Barn, CCE of Jefferson, Lewis, St Lawrence Counties, and Cornell University staff (Mike Baker).
  - ii. How have they contributed to the overall results of the LFPP project? The Advisory Committee has provided insightful and invaluable guidance on running this project and helped this project be transparent to the community and to producers. The freezer space is an invaluable asset to producers who are no longer tied to short term sales and can now sell products at a higher premium because they can butcher and hold the meat when it is optimal to go to market. CCE resources are shared and better organized around the needs of meat producers. Red Barn helped tremendously by teaching meat cutting at the Livestock Conference and by providing needed service for local producers who want to keep ownership of their meats.
  - iii. How will they continue to contribute to your project's future activities, beyond the performance period of this LFPP grant? We hope to continue all these relationships as we transition into the "Food Hub" models.
  
5. Are you using contractors to conduct the work? If so, how did their work contribute to the results of the LFPP project? No
  
6. Have you publicized any results yet?\* We have not publicized "results" except reported to MeatSuite the number of farms we have signed up and provide brief history of this project publically at the Livestock Conference.
  - 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? Through publicity we have reached approximately 30 consumers, 10 advisory members and 50 producers for the Livestock Conference. In addition, the CSA has a Facebook page, a website and sent out brochures and a quality survey. Feedback from the public forums was that consumers wanted more variety of meats to which the CSA responded by bringing in more producers to offer pork and chicken.

\*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? Yes, we have informally responded to input from producers.
  - ii. What feedback was relayed (specific comments)? Very few of the 'evaluations' provided on the Livestock Conference were returned. Comments did indicate producers would like the Livestock Conference to be an annual event, they appreciated the technical help and support and continuously raise the issue of inadequate slaughter facilities.

8. Budget Summary:

- i. As part of the LFPP closeout procedures, you are required to submit the SF-425 (Final Federal Financial Report). The SF-425 has already been submitted through our finance department.
- ii. Check here if you have completed the SF-425 and are submitting it with this report:
- iii. Did the project generate any income? yes
  - a. If yes, how much was generated and how was it used to further the objectives of the award? The Livestock Conference generated registration fees that was used to pay for miscellaneous expenses of the conference including expenses that the LFPP disallows such as food.

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).

The importance of key infrastructure into the profitability and access of local meats was underscored when we lost local USDA slaughter facilities leading to a lack of confidence a producer run cooperative could coordinate and effectively organize adequate meat products to market. Despite increased production, technical assistance and consumer desire to eat locally produced meats we learned if we do not have reasonable access to basic USDA slaughter capability we are limited in our ability to reach our goals. On the other hand, we also learned there is always room for a multi-prong approach. While the local meat processing capacity is limited there is excess capacity at the very large facilities (Cargill etc). While this does not help local producers maintain control of their product we can educate consumers of chain and specialty retail markets that carry locally produced meats. This also shifts producers focus on where their profit margins are going to be – instead of premium payments for a quality product they will be paid

basic going rates at auction. That means returns are based on effective production practices.

- ii. If goals or outcome measures were not achieved, identify and share the lessons learned to help others expedite problem-solving: We were unable to meet the original goal of creating a local meat producer lead cooperative that had broad local, and statewide markets. We were unaware or overly confident that the infrastructure needed to allow that local growth was secure. Greater research into the security of local slaughter facilities may have provided a more realistic insight into
- 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: Finding and retaining staff who had the necessary expertise and skill sets in this complex field was difficult. We lost our educator to higher paid positions.

#### 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.

We have been exceedingly fortunate to receive additional funding from State Senator Pattie Ritchie to initiate a "Food Hub". As meats and proteins are an obvious anchor product in a region where the growing season is very short growing the production of quality meats for end use by local consumers is a key strategy for a successful Food Hub. In addition, continuing to increase supply of locally raised meats allows us to continue to build and create alternate markets and retail systems especially systems that can increase access to low income audiences.

Before I continue about the Food Hub's role in sustaining this project I would like to acknowledge that the support of previous FMNP funding and this LFPP funding is a key reason CCEJC has been identified as the organization in NNY with the capacity to administer \$1 million dollars in State (Agriculture and Markets) funds. We are viewed as an organization that effectively works with producers and consumers and utilizes public funding with transparency and responsibility. We appreciate this opportunity by the LFPP to promote the growth and profitability of small producers and strengthen the local food system for local consumers.

- 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?

Yes, we intend to submit for a 2017 LFPP planning project that will allow us to obtain an unprecedentedly rich collection of data and mapping of our local food system. By using ArcGIS layering of maps to help us better identify who, where and how the agricultural and market infrastructure and assets are we can better understand, strategize and plan how locally produced food can strengthen the food system in the four counties of St Lawrence, Jefferson, Lewis and Oswego counties and reach a local consumer base.

While there is some contact information of local agriculture in the four counties we have come to understand there is no system for manipulating this farm production data/information in ways that overlay other assets such as transportation routes, retail outlets, institutions (schools, hospitals, etc), and population centers. This is information that our 2014 LFPP advisory committee asked for but the resources to create and capture this information was unavailable. Once obtained we will, for example, be able to overlay small and medium beef operations with slaughter facilities including USDA and custom cutting operations, retail markets, population centers and transportation systems.

In addition, CCEJC intends to conduct a number of pilot projects to test the feasibility for use in a food hub. These include a cross docking facility, a warehouse with refrigeration/freezer capacity, "farm stand retail outlets (that will include value added and meat products)", a refrigerated truck to assist with local movement of product and producer owned restaurant which does not necessarily generate "profit" but acts as a market for local producers to sell their product profitably. In the restaurant concept that local produce, meats and other local products will have value added by becoming a meal.

Overall, this project has been viewed by numerous producers and the advisory committee as a success. Producers are continuing to increase production or produce more profitably. Additional markets, especially local markets have been established and our outreach, jobs, technical assistance, and other intended outcomes has met or exceeded our goals.

In summary we have provided technical assistance and education to over 350 producers. This education and assistance has included a broad range of topics from quality production methods to marketing to processing systems. We have increased market access through a CSA, MeatSuite, and by increasing much needed access to freezer capacity. At least 50 producers are now working directly with a new consumer base. We have reached over 285,000 consumer contacts with education and awareness to encourage the purchase and use of locally produced meats including outreach to low income audiences. We have found a viable strategy to sustain and improve on this work due to the support that has been provided through this LFPP funding.