

**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 your assigned grant specialist 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>	September 30, 2014-March 31, 2017
<b>Authorized Representative Name:</b>	Jessica Moore
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<b>Recipient Organization Name:</b>	Culinary Cuts, LLC
<b>Project Title as Stated on Grant Agreement:</b>	Data analytics for grass-fed beef producers in the Northeast
<b>Grant Agreement Number:</b> <i>(e.g. 14-LFPPX-XX-XXXX)</i>	14-LFPPX-PA-0147
<b>Year Grant was Awarded:</b>	2014
<b>Project City/State:</b>	Philadelphia, PA
<b>Total Awarded Budget:</b>	\$100,000

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: To collect cattle carcass data from farms such as breed, age, identification number, and carcass yield data including cut weights.**

a. **Progress Made:** The proposal was changed (USDA approval) with respect to this objective because Culinary Cuts LLC sold Philly Cow Share early in the project. The intent was to build a dataset from cattle purchased by PCS, but that proved impractical due to the sale of the company. We altered the grant agreement with USDA, and began a new approach to data collection.

By partnering with meat processors in NY and PA, we were able to gather cattle and carcass yield data from over 350 head of cattle, including the weights of individual cuts and primals associated with each animal ID. We entered this large set of data into the online software that we developed, called MeatYield.

b. **Impact on Community:** The data set collected formulates a “benchmark” average for individual farmers to compare their own herds and groups against. We created a data model and data management system to allow MeatYield users to evaluate a carcass for yield of meat and all sellable products. Our data model (the fields that we use) was designed with producer input and matches the data they use. MeatYield allows users to compare carcasses by feed type, sex, breed, processor, source farm, and other groups. MeatYield gives farmers a real, Northeast-based data set to compare their own animals against. Understanding how their herd or group compares across different data sets, including the “ideal black Angus” industry standard, our MeatYield data set, and their own farm’s other groups informs farmers of how to adjust breeding, feeding, and cutting order in order to improve sellable meat yield and thus, farm earnings and profits.

ii. **Goal/Objective 2: To create a web-accessible tool to store and analyze this data.**

a. **Progress Made:** We have created MeatYield.com, a data management and benchmarking online software for farmers to enter and analyze herd data. The software, which will continue to be developed for user-friendliness and function, is “complete” and useable. While the site is fully operational, we continue to operate it in a “soft-launch” fashion. Visitors to Meatyield.com see a “coming soon” banner, however, the site can be viewed at **staging.meatyield.com**. We provided 10 test-user farmers with access to the live site and we have uploaded their data for their viewing. We continue to talk with producer groups to give access to testing accounts.

MeatYield offers users: 1. Easy data entry, 2. Visual data display, 3. Simple management of groups and batches, and 4. Real-time benchmarking reports against an industry “ideal black angus” and the MeatYield data set, which evolves with every user’s data. One unexpected outcome was to build widgets which can automatically upload a farm’s data from an Excel file. Some processors are able to provide carcass cut-out data in Excel and we developed tools to upload those files directly into the software, allowing users to skip the task of manual data entry.



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?**

The intended audience for this project was farmers in the Northeast marketing beef in direct channels by the carcass and by the cut. We then included aggregators such as small, regional brands and meat processors. Each of these parties can benefit from data collection and analysis. We continue to recruit new MeatYield users beyond the grant-funded period.

4. Discuss your community partnerships.

- i. **Who are your community partners?** We partnered with individual farmers, producer groups, meat processors, and small brand aggregators as well as Extension personnel and agricultural non-profits.
- ii. **How have they contributed to the overall results of the LFPP project?** Each partner influenced the design and function of MeatYield through their feedback. We consulted with our community partners throughout the design process, including in choosing input the data fields and calculated outputs performed by the software. Since each partner is a potential user of MeatYield, they were critical contributors to its design and function.
- iii. **How will they continue to contribute to your project's future activities, beyond the performance period of this LFPP grant?** This LFPP grant was to investigate beef carcass yield data and create a system to collect, store, and analyze that data so that producers could make informed decisions to improve their profitability on each head marketed. Our project partners will continue to contribute to the MeatYield project by using the online tool, entering their data, and offering us feedback on improvements and added features. We have created 10 accounts for partners, and are adding more, so they can continue to use MeatYield well beyond the life of the project.

5. **Did you use contractors to conduct the work? If so, how did their work contribute to the results of the LFPP project?**

Through a bid process, we contracted with two web developers and one graphic designer to build the MeatYield software platform. We also contracted with Matt LeRoux, Agricultural Marketing Specialist with Cornell Cooperative Extension of Tompkins County. Each contractor made contributions to the design and function of MeatYield with thoughtful comments about the user interface and outputs.

6. **Have you publicized any results yet?\***

Thus far, we have been "soft launching" MeatYield through personal communications including phone calls, email, in person, and web chats. We have chosen the best test users and professionals in the field to discuss MeatYield and conduct demonstrations. Early users are supplied with a link MeatYield. Until the site is publically available, it can be viewed at this link, with a sample set of data: [staging.meatyield.com](http://staging.meatyield.com). We tabled at the NY Beef Producers' Association annual conference, showing interested passers-by a short demo. We presented on MeatYield at the PASA Winter Conference. We have not yet created promotional materials or publically launched the site. While the site is fully functional and complete, we plan to continue to recruit users one at a time. We have planned to give a presentation after the project ends, at the New England Meat Conference in April.

- i. **If yes, how did you publicize the results?** Individual contacts through our networks.

ii. **To whom did you publicize the results?** Farmers, ag support industry professionals, and processors.

iii. **How many stakeholders (i.e. people, entities) did you reach?** Exposure to 100-150 people.

**\*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?** During our early development phase we visited farmers, extension personnel, and processors to discuss the project. We have heard from those stakeholders which features they think are most useful and places for potential improvements or added features.

ii. **What feedback was relayed (specific comments)?** Specifically, community members informed the data model, causing us to remove fields such as USDA quality grade, because grading is not available at small processors. Stakeholders also told us that most small scale farms and even processors do not have scales for live animals, so we made the “live weight” field optional, instead of mandatory. We also heard from processors and aggregators that it may be easier to enter cattle data in groups, instead of individually, so we created a process for group data entry.

8. Budget Summary:

i. **As part of the LFPP 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:**

ii. **Did the project generate any income?** NO

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

9. Lessons Learned:

i. **Summarize any lessons learned. Draw from 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).** We learned that, while we knew farms were not keeping detailed records of carcass yields, processors were also typically not tracking these yields either. As the reality set in that farms are generally unwilling or unable to weigh and record such data, we turned more attention to the processor as a logical data collection point. We had heard that a few were able to provide printed reports of carcass yields to their customers. We met with multiple processors to observe the means used to collect data. Two processors were using semi-automated systems which sped up the data collection process, but still relied on staff labor to place each package on a scale. A third processor collected carcass data, periodically, manually, on paper, and then typed it into Excel. The two processors with automated systems were storing, but not using their data. The processor with manual data collection is also an aggregator and used carcass cut-out data to offer premiums, and discounts, to his suppliers based on performance.

While the automated systems require staff labor somewhere in the plant, they are efficient in design and allow the user to export the data into Excel. Processors with this

technology are very few and most small-scale processors still operate without digital data collection or management.

This data collection revelation taught us that there is a need in the small-scale meat industry for labor-efficient data collection tools. One such system is Vistatrac, for example. There are also tools, such as Farm Wizard, which enable farms and aggregators to track production records, but MeatYield fills a gap which is post-production, post-processing data collection and analysis.

- ii. **If goals or outcome measures were not achieved, identify and share the lessons learned to help others expedite problem-solving:** NA
- 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:** Embarking on a project like this requires cooperative partners who are already collecting the necessary data and who see the value in data analysis. We were fortunate to identify and meet such partners early in our process. It would have been difficult to have had to convince farmers and processors of the value of such data and expect for them to collect and share it.

We also learned that for success, the processors need to be in partnership with the farmers. Partnership is needed for the data collection. A farm business's success depends on the percent carcass to retail yield. A small change in yield has an incrementally larger impact on the farm's cost of goods and in turn, on gross sales. This connection and its impact on the farm is why processors need to partner with farms, to collect and analyze data, helping ensure the long-term viability of both entities.

#### 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.**

This grant was for the development of an online data collecting and analyzing software platform and collection of an initial data set with which to test it. By project completion, we had developed such a platform, called MeatYield. We have also demonstrated MeatYield's capacity to processors, farmers, and small-brand aggregators to collect their feedback and to orient them to using it. Future work will include additional user recruitment and data uploads.

#### **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?**

We plan to seek funding to investigate the data-collecting software systems available to small-scale processors and how to make uploads to MeatYield from each system seamless.

More work is needed working with processors to encourage adoption of in-plant data collections systems and how they are beneficial. We also need to continue to educate, and demonstrate to farmers and aggregators the value of data analysis and how it impacts their bottom line.