

**Farmers Market Promotion Program (FMPP)  
Final Performance Report**

The final performance report summarizes the outcome of your FMPP award objectives. 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 your assigned grant specialist to avoid delays. Should you need to mail your documents via hard copy, contact FMPP staff to obtain mailing instructions: FMPP Phone: 202-720-4152; Fax: 202-720-0300

<b>Report Date Range:</b> <i>(e.g. September 30, 20XX-September 29, 20XX)</i>	SEPTEMBER 30, 2015 – SEPTEMBER 29, 2017
<b>Authorized Representative Name:</b>	ELLIOTT BASS
<b>Authorized Representative Phone:</b>	210-446-0099
<b>Authorized Representative Email:</b>	EXCG@EXCG.BIZ
<b>Recipient Organization Name:</b>	EXCELSIOR COOPERATIVE GROUP, LLC
<b>Project Title as Stated on Grant Agreement:</b>	ALAMO RANCH FARMERS MARKET
<b>Grant Agreement Number:</b> <i>(e.g. 15-FMPPX-XX-XXXX)</i>	15-FMPP-TX-0056
<b>Year Grant was Awarded:</b>	2015
<b>Project City/State:</b>	SAN ANTONIO, TX
<b>Total Awarded Budget:</b>	\$97,761.88

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: \_\_\_\_\_; Email: \_\_\_\_\_; Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

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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 if necessary. For each item below, qualitatively discuss the progress made and indicate the impact on the community, if any.
  - i. Goal/Objective 1: Open new farmers market in the Alamo Ranch area of Bexar County, Texas
    - i.a. Progress Made: Due to our inability to acquire a physical location for our farmers market, we transformed our format from a static to a mobile operation. This format has the benefit of providing greater convenience to the consumer as well as the producers and giving us a greater market reach.
    - i.b. Impact on Community: Low. Since this is a new format we've had slow progress due to consumers and producers being unfamiliar with the concept. We've focused on advertising in order to educate consumers about our mobile format.
  - ii. Goal/Objective 2: Make available USDA SNAP at our market
    - ii.a. Progress Made: Our farmers market has been assigned a SNAP number by the USDA. The Farmers Market Coalition approved our market to receive free equipment to accept EBT cards. We now have the ability to accept SNAP at any location.
    - ii.b. Impact on Community: We have not had any SNAP customers yet. However, we are still working on how best to serve and reach lower income areas.
  - iii. Goal/Objective 3: Create mobile farmers market
    - iii.a. Progress Made: We did switch our format to a mobile farmers market. Our ecommerce website is operational and we can accept and process online orders and payments.
    - iii.b. Impact on Community: Low. Since this is a new format we've had slow progress due to consumers and producers being unfamiliar with the concept. We've focused on advertising in order to educate consumers about our mobile format. Also, producers have been slow to respond to a new and different distribution method.
  
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, 2015). Include further explanation if necessary.
  - i. Number of direct jobs created: 1
  - ii. Number of jobs retained: 4
  - iii. Number of indirect jobs created:
  - iv. Number of markets expanded:
  - v. Number of new markets established: 1
  - vi. Market sales increased by \$insert dollars and increased by insert percentage%.
  - vii. Number of farmers/producers that have benefited from the project: 2
    - vii.a. Percent Increase:

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?
4. While we have been advertising our service, we've yet to have any customers try our mobile service. But switching to our mobile format has given us the ability to service the whole county and surrounding areas instead of just one neighborhood.
- 5.
6. Discuss your community partnerships.
  - i. Who are your community partners?  
Capital Farm Credit, Texas Department of Agriculture, Fair Food Network, Edible San Antonio
  - ii. How have they contributed to the overall results of the FMPP project?  
Capital Farm Credit has contributed grants funds, free shopping bags, and an advertising banner.  
The Texas Department of Agriculture runs the Go Texan program providing us advertising and technical support.  
The Fair Food Network has licensed us their SNAP incentive program Double Up Food Bucks.  
Edible San Antonio has provided contacts to producers within the local foodshed.
  - iii. How will they continue to contribute to your project's future activities, beyond the performance period of this FMPP grant?  
We expect further grant opportunities from Capital Farm Credit. As long as we are Go Texan member the Texas Department of Agriculture will continue advertising our market. And Edible San Antonio will provide free press to support our market and producers.
7. Did you use contractors to conduct the work? If so, how did their work contribute to the results of the FMPP project?
- 8.
9. We did use a contractor mainly for website development. While unable to completely create a custom online platform for ecommerce, we did get setup with a suitable website for our needs. Our website will be key to offering our customers the convenience of online shopping when they wish to purchase farmers markets products.
10. Have you publicized any results yet?\*
- 11.
12. No, results have not been publicized. We need additional time to operate under our new format.
13. But we have included our advertising in Edible San Antonio.
14.
  - 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?

\*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).

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

i. If so, how did you collect the information?

ii. What feedback was relayed (specific comments)?

We conducted personal interviews with vendors who are currently selling at local farmers markets. They shared their stories of the difficulties in attending markets. The time spent travelling to and from a market, combined with the time waiting for customers on market day, took them away from production and other business needs. In addition, sales at farmers markets were substantially down from previous years. Some vendors were still deciding whether they would continue to sell at a farmers market or not due to financial reasons. They did express interest in being able to sell through our farmers market if it alleviated some of their burdens in operating their businesses.

16. Budget Summary:

i. 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:

ii. Did the project generate any income?  
No income was generated.

iii.

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

17. 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).

The farmers market concept is a dying format in our area. While consumers will say they like farmers markets, a survey of markets in the area tell a different story. The downtown farmers market is popular due to being located with other attractions, but vendor sales are down compared to previous years (up to 60% in some cases). Other farmers markets in the area have come and gone over the years. There are numerous reasons for this situation, but no one has investigated further.

Our main negative experience was our inability to secure a physical location for our farmers market. The original location in our grant application became inaccessible due to flood damage. Our backup location was with a local non-profit that built a new movie theater. The plan was to operate on their premises before they opened for business on Sunday. Although they were agreeable, we were not able to obtain permission from the property owner to use their parking lot and were left scrambling for an alternative.

Unfortunately, no alternative, viable locations were discovered. Commercial property owners viewed a farmers market as a nuisance rather than an attraction or wanted to charge hefty rents. The local school system denied any use of their facilities even though they sat unused on the weekend. And the churches were not an option due to being in use on Sundays. We even

tried to work with the local grocery chain but they cancelled the project after three months into planning it.

The positive outcome from this dilemma is that we decided to change our format. If a physical location was the problem, then eliminating it would solve the problem. A mobile farmers market would fit our needs better than a static one anyway. One, we would not be limited to a single neighborhood and would be able to reach more customers. Two, we could operate more than just one day a week. Three, we could offer much more convenience to both the customer and the producers.

We are excited to see if we can make a mobile farmers market work in our area. Due to the popularity of online purchasing, we believe we can transition the farmers market experience into the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

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

Mobile farmers markets have the ability to provide a level of convenience for both customers and producers that is just not available in the standard format. Customers may not be able to visit a market on the single day of operation. And producers don't know if they will profit at a market before they attend. If pre-sales can be taken online then gathered from producers and delivered straight to the customer, then those issues can be avoided altogether. This format would probably work better in a non-densely populated area like ours.

- 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:

Talk to local producers to investigate whether a static or mobile market would better serve their needs. We've found that if producers are already attending farmers markets, they may not be able to expand to another physical location. However, they may be able to service a mobile farmers market since they do not have to physically attend themselves.

#### 18. 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 will continue to build upon and tinker with our mobile market format into 2018. Our advertising with Edible San Antonio runs until November. With their assistance, we are still making contacts with producers to join our distribution service. By handling all marketing and delivery, our service should be attractive to producers since it allows them to concentrate on production. And if a producer's time is freed up for more production, it should lead to more profitability.

Consumer education will be the biggest hurdle to overcome going forward. But if the consumer is willing to pay for the convenience of delivery, then that will be a game changer for the reach of farmers markets. Being free of a location will allow for a wider distribution of products and more opportunities for sales. Targeted advertising will likely be the most effective to introduce this new idea. And higher income households will most likely pay for such a service. We plan to rely on social media to focus our advertising to reach such an audience.

Since mobile farmers markets are a relatively new operation, we don't have much information to forecast future results. Home delivery of foodstuffs has been a chaotic industry and is littered with many corpses. We probably won't have any real information to add until we get a year in operation.

- 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?

There are a few other similar projects across the United States. Home delivery of farm products is still a system that hasn't quite been firmly established. Further experiments are needed to see what type of setup is effective and/or can be adapted to a particular area. The only thing to do is keep attempting these endeavors and follow their progress. We plan on continuing for as long as it is financially possible.