

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; Fax: 202-720-0300

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

Report Date Range: <i>(e.g. September 30, 20XX-September 29, 20XX)</i>	April 1, 2018 to September 30, 2018
Authorized Representative Name:	November 15, 2018
Authorized Representative Phone:	Lynn C. Blackwood, Jr., Ph.D.
Authorized Representative Email:	blackwoodfarmproducts@yahoo.com
Recipient Organization Name:	Virginia Aqua-Farmers Network LLC
Project Title as Stated on Grant Agreement:	The Expansion of the Local Fish market
Grant Agreement Number: <i>(e.g. 14-LFPPX-XX-XXXX)</i>	15-LFPP-VA-0105
Year Grant was Awarded:	2015
Project City/State:	Farmville, VA
Total Awarded Budget:	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: _____

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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: “Product Introduction and Improvement” – Full Development of the five ready-to-eat, locally sourced products.
 - a. Progress Made: The final product recipes were completed. VT Food Science performed additional testing, i.e. freezing and refrigeration in different packaging. Testing for food safety at various levels and taste testing. The final modified product for an eight ounce serving reduced calories from 360 to 220, reduced total fat from 25 grams to 10 grams, reduced saturated fat from 15 grams to 4 grams, reduced cholesterol from 115 mg to 75 mg, reduced sodium from 1530 mg to 430 mg, reduced total carbohydrates from 20 grams to 17 grams. The pH level of the chowder would need an appropriate heating process or storage condition to avoid any health issues or adversely affect the flavor of the product. Refrigeration and freezing must be utilized at all stages of handling of the finished product: storage, distribution/transporting and retail display. There were two modified recipes tested one with a béchamel mornay and one without to improve creaminess. VT Food Science taste tests revealed the quiche without the béchamel mornay was preferred. The quiche modified recipe reduced calories from 320 calories per slice to 210, reduced total fat from 24 grams to 12 grams, saturated fat from 11 grams to 4.5 grams, cholesterol from 200 mg to 70 mg, and sodium from 420 mg to 340 mg. VT Food Science Testing Results: Through acceptability testing, the control and treatment highlighted similar ratings. The new formulation was rated higher by mean. The t-value of -2.40 was calculated and show to be a significant difference noted with the new formulation being preferred. Panelists consumed seafood products a few times a month giving the following conclusions: Through hedonic testing, there is a significant difference between the two recipes with the new formations being preferred over the original recipes. See VT final report for a more detailed report of their findings.
 - b. Impact on Community: The impact on the community is sourcing local products to make local fresh ready-to eat products that are healthful and flavorful.
 - ii. Goal/Objective 2: “Vendor and Customer Recruitment” – Market fully developed, locally sourced products via created and purchased marketing materials
 - a. Progress Made: VAN began the newly added Clarksville Farm Fresh Market. The final products were not complete until later May, 2018. We begin promoting the products prior to the market opening through the Chamber of Commerce’s Facebook page and website to reach the chamber members and build enthusiasm. In addition, we worked with a seafood supplier near the ocean to bring in select saltwater products that we felt would help increase our customer base and also increase the potential of selling both ready-to-eats. For example, by offering fresh scallops, customers may also purchase the chowder then walk over to our neighbor vendors and buy salad

fixings and fresh bread for a complete meal. Another example might be that we have fresh mahi mahi and the mahi mahi would be included in our weekly marketing on Facebook. The mahi mahi catches the eye of the consumer which drives the consumer to the farm market but while they are there they purchase the chowder and a quiche. While they are there they may go by the chocolate pie from the baker next to us or fresh pork from the vendor across from us. We found by adding some select additional saltwater products with the fresh water products actually increased foot traffic and help RTE sales.

The local brewery in Clarksville approached VAN while at the farm market and loved both RTE so much that they invited VAN to host as many Friday or Saturdays as possible selling our products. Since we did not have a food truck or a restaurant permit, we joined with a local restaurant that does have a food truck, Main Street Bagel and Bistro and sold food at the brewery.

b. Impact on Community: Increased customer base not only for VAN but for local farm vendors, and three businesses.

iii. Goal/Objective 3: “Advertising, Promotion, and Outreach for the Market” – Enhance VAN’s website with respect to the online store to promote and sell finished products to the surrounding community and public.

a. Progress Made: At each market we would ask customers to leave their cell phone or email address if they wanted to be notified of specials, events, and reminders of when VAN would be at the market. Most customers left their cell phone number and through text messaging, we would send out quick message the day before we were to be at the market with the list of products and any sale items. For example, a text message in the am stating, “don’t forget today’s farm fresh market, VAN will be there with all your favorites!” Text messaging was far more effective than even Facebook. Word-of-mouth marketing from customers was also our best promotion. We had several customers come and say “I hear you have the best quiche and I would like to buy one or I hear you have amazing chowder, do you have it today?” Because the goal of a new website did not happen, we found ways around through social media, text messaging, and word-of-mouth.

b. Impact on Community: Building relationships with potential customers and other local farm suppliers.

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, 2017). Include further explanation if necessary.

- i. Number of direct jobs created: no employees only contractors
- ii. Number of jobs retained: n/a
- iii. Number of indirect jobs created: n/a
- iv. Number of markets expanded: 3
- v. Number of new markets established: 3
- vi. Market sales increased by \$3,000 and increased by 20%.
- vii. Number of farmers/producers that have benefited from the project: five
 - a. Percent Increase: 25%

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 expanded our market presence in Farmville and Clarksville giving access to low income/low access populations. Local farm markets are open to people of all income levels and ethnic groups.

4. Discuss your community partnerships.
 - i. Who are your community partners? Membership with the Farmville Area Chamber of Commerce and the Clarksville Area Chamber of Commerce.
 - ii. How have they contributed to the overall results of the LFPP project? Membership in the Chamber helps expand our presence in the county's they serve. Both help promote VAN through their marketing outlets.
 - iii. How will they continue to contribute to your project's future activities, beyond the performance period of this LFPP grant? The local chamber of commerce provide continued marketing and exposure to the business and local community.

5. Did you use contractors to conduct the work? If so, how did their work contribute to the results of the LFPP project? During this project, VAN used many contractors throughout this grant process from contracting kitchen use to meet inspection requirements, to production crew, the RTE developer, supplies to make the products, packaging and labeling the products, and a food truck vendor. We had contractors work the various farm markets promoting the products from Farmville, Lynchburg, Williamsburg, Clarksville, and Brandermill. Without contractors, reaching our goals would not have happened.

6. Have you publicized any results yet?*

 - i. If yes, how did you publicize the results? We have one brochure.
 - ii. To whom did you publicize the results? Public
 - 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).

7. Have you collected any feedback from your community and additional stakeholders about your work?
 - i. If so, how did you collect the information? Please see VT report for testing feedback. In addition, VAN did face-to-face taste testing for direct feedback @ markets.
 - ii. What feedback was relayed (specific comments)? All feedback was very positive.

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? VAN sales increased by 20%, \$3,000 because of the RTE development. Since VAN was not able to hire a web developer the funds will be used to hire a consultant to make modest revisions to the website. VAN will use the website as an informational tool and remove the shopping capability which takes someone managing it on a regular basis. VAN does not have the capacity to support such a person. Modest modifications should at least give VAN exposure and drive them to our social media outlets which are less costly to manage.
 - a. If yes, how much was generated and how was it used to further the objectives of the award? See above

- 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).
- ii. If goals or outcome measures were not achieved, identify and share the lessons learned to help others expedite problem-solving:
- 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:
 This project has been challenging as VAN learned that entering the ready-to-eat food market presents many obstacles. We learned a tremendous amount about the science of recipe development, food preparation, temperature controls, testing scenarios, how different ingredients determine shelf life or whether a food can be frozen and reheated in its original form. There are numerous regulations, some seem logical and some seem excessive but they are there for many reasons. If you are a farmer raising the product, processing the product and trying to turn those products into a food source, there is a lot of work involved to get to the end-product. One of the biggest challenges was finding people to work or to follow through with their work. At times, this kept us from meeting some goals timely.
 Although we had challenges, we learned a lot, gained a wonderful network of customers, helped other farmers, made some friends along the way, increased our sales, and gained an appreciation that this learning experience would not have been possible without USDA's generous help and the hard work of VT Food Science.

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.
- 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?
 VAN will continue to produce the RTE products produced by this grant. We will continue to build new markets and work with as many local farmers using their products as well as VANs to produce the RTEs. We are in the process of taking orders for both of these products for customers who want them over the holidays and we will be working the local brewery as well. At the Clarksville market, we met a wonderful baker who has a very good customer base and it is our plan to work some special events over the winter months with her.
 Most of our markets have been farm markets or events. We know there are many challenges to enter the grocery store market but it would be our hope, that at some point, we can work towards this goal. If you go into a Wegmans, Publix, Whole Foods, and even Food Lion. Ready-to-eat foods are gaining popularity, especially local.