OMB No. 0582-0287

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; Fax: 202-720-0300

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

Report Date Range: *(e.g. September 30, 20XX-September 29, 20XX)*	October 1st, 2015 – April 30th, 2016
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Recipient Organization Name:	Bould Development
Project Title as Stated on Grant Agreement:	Wyoming Food Hub Network Feasibility Study
Grant Agreement Number: *(e.g. 14-LFPPX-XX-XXXX)*	15-LFPP-WY-0137
Year Grant was Awarded:	2015
Project City/State:	Wyoming
Total Awarded Budget:	$25,000

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: _______________

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

Goal 1: Conduct a market assessment of each identified cluster, including agricultural production, wholesale demand, and infrastructure that could support a food hub.

Objective 1: Assess Wyoming's food production, local food infrastructure, and challenges and barriers to local food market entry.

Progress Made: We developed and opened surveys for all local food producers in Wyoming to gather and assess the local food production in Wyoming and each cluster. Seventy-one growers responded to the survey, ranging from vegetable producers to ranchers to grain farmers. 61% produce vegetables, 31% produce eggs, 28% produce beef, and 18% produce fruits. The survey addresses products produced, quantity, acreage, available infrastructure, challenges and barriers to local food market entry, and interest level in a food hub.

Collectively, fruit and vegetable growers who provided information on their production volumes cultivate 123 acres. Thirty-five growers (71%) expressed interest in expanding acreage if demand warranted the investment, and could expand production an additional 245 acres. Crops cited most frequently by producer respondents include tomatoes, salad greens, peppers, potatoes, grains, cucumbers, beets, hay and sweet corn.

Season extension is fairly prevalent in this group. Twenty-eight (58%) already employ season extension strategies and an additional eight (17%) would be open to pursuing season extension in the future. Twenty-five of these growers provided information on their square footage of greenhouse, hoop house or high tunnel production, totaling over 110,000 square feet, almost 2.5 acres. Labor, infrastructure costs, and sales limitations were cited as the biggest barriers to pursuing or expanding season extension strategies.

Thirty-one (47%) grower survey respondents are very or extremely interested in selling into a food hub, and an additional 26 (39%) are somewhat interested. These producers have a total of 100-120 acres under fruit and vegetable production.

Twenty-one (57%) interested growers have a food safety plan, but none are GAP certified, though most would consider it if demand warranted the investment. There is minimal access to infrastructure that is often critical for wholesale success. Eight (21%) growers have access to quick cooling and cold storage, and four (11%) have access to refrigerated trucks for deliveries.

Survey respondents key needs include: farm identification, transportation logistics, farm pick up, liability insurance, support with wholesale brokerage, and product cooling and cold storage.

The survey instrument addresses current infrastructure and infrastructure gaps. Growers are frustrated with the lack of commercial processing facilities in Wyoming. Survey responses suggested infrastructure gaps they would like to see filled, including cold storage, frozen storage (particularly for proteins), meat and produce processing facility, tannery (for animal hides), malting facility, and a mill (for brewing/breads). There are 19 state inspected meat processing facilities in Wyoming and zero USDA-inspected facilities. Regulatory infrastructure has emerged as a need for many producers throughout the study. Liability insurance and GAP certification are two areas a potential food hub could assist producers with to help access wholesale markets.

Through our survey and interviews with producers and buyers, we have gathered data on perceived barriers to local food market entry. Interested growers are most interested in a food hub with the features including farm-identified sales, locally owned and operated hub, sales and marketing assistance for farmers, farm pick-up and transportation, liability insurance for farms, cost assistance for GAP certification, cold chain and traceability of all aggregated products, and cooling/freezer storage capacity. Producers have indicated labor, infrastructure costs, and sales limitations as the biggest barriers to pursuing or expanding season extension strategies.

Impact on Community:

Primary research identified existing infrastructure across Wyoming that could be leveraged by a food hub, enabling the hub to minimize capital investment requirements. Wyoming has highly committed infrastructure partners who are passionate about a food hub network in Wyoming potentially serving as a foundation for the development of a local food system in Wyoming.

The final analysis revealed significant interest among producers engaged, who have moderate volume of supply and opportunity for production expansion. Many fruit and vegetable producers have invested in season extension. There is high product alignment among producers and buyers. Pockets of production have been identified around the state with significant interest in local food. With collaboration of a state-wide food hub network this production can potentially reach many, if not all, clusters around Wyoming. These findings suggest there is adequate supply, interest, and potential for the development of the local food system in Wyoming.

Objective 2: Assess and quantify Wyoming's local food demand.

Progress Made: The project team developed and distributed a buyer survey, and conducted multiple interviews in each cluster, to assess and quantify the local food demand in and around Wyoming.

Twenty-one buyers responded to the survey. The majority (13 or 62%) are educational institutions. Others include restaurants, one direct-to-consumer distributor, one grocery store, and one hospital. Buyers are all located across Wyoming, with clusters in Casper and Big Horn Basin, and one buyer in Montana.

Eight (44%) buyers who responded to the question indicated that they currently purchase or use locally produced farm products, though most emphasized that local products are difficult to find. The most pressing challenges for buyers to sourcing locally include: price points, finding consistent year-round supply with volume and/or with food safety certifications, time associated with sourcing from farms, seasonality and food consistency.

Almost all buyers have at least basic food safety requirements in place for produce suppliers, but these vary drastically. Institutional buyers are most likely to require GAP and HACCP certification for produce and all buyers have certification requirements in place for their protein suppliers. Eleven (out of 13) respondents indicated that liability insurance is a requirement.

Buyers who provided information on annual farm product expenditures collectively spend $9.5 million annually - $3.2 million per year on fresh, whole produce; $1.3 million per year on processed produce; $3.7 million per year on proteins (meat, poultry, dairy, eggs); $1.3 million per year on grains. Approximately three percent of total produce purchasing and three percent of total proteins purchasing among respondents is local. Approximately six percent of total produce purchasing among respondents is organic.

Eleven buyers (out of 18) are very or extremely likely to purchase directly or indirectly from a food hub. Six additional buyers are somewhat interested. Lettuce and tomatoes are the top products that interested buyers are looking to purchase from the food hub, but buyers also expressed interest in the following processed items: washed/cut salad greens, peeled carrots, broccoli florets, cauliflower florets, shredded lettuce, diced onions, shredded carrots, diced celery, and crunch pack apples. Buyers also indicated interest in purchasing chicken and beef products, along with certain grain products, particularly bread products and flour.

Community impact:

Surveys and interviews have identified pockets of demand, mainly centered around population centers and areas with high consumer interest in local food. A food hub network would expand availability of local food, both by selling to institutions in high demand centers by connecting them with production pockets and increasing consumer demand through marketing and promotion.

The major obstacles, needs, and challenges for wholesale buyers to purchase local food include food safety, liability and traceability, delivery to warehouse, consistent supply, high quality, and an agent that provides marketing and branding support. These barriers need to be addressed and solutions identified as Wyoming moves forward with its local food system.

The study has received interest from project stakeholders in each cluster whom will be able to build upon this research and continue cluster development by conducting an in-depth analysis of the cost structure of the proposed model, including the breakeven throughput volume.

Goal 2: *Develop Wyoming food system communication network.*

The purpose of Goal 2 is to develop a Wyoming-based local food system communication network for statewide planners and stakeholder collaboration. The system will allow for communication with growers, buyers and food systems stakeholders. This communication tool will be used to share out updates of the research, and give growers and buyers a chance to begin communicating with each other right away – sharing information about product availability, product needs.

Qualitative progress: Stakeholders across the state have gathered and formed the Wyoming Farm-to-Plate Task Force to develop a Wyoming local food communication network. In collaboration with the Wyoming Department of Education, we have held two in-person summits to gather input and provide open forum for local food stakeholders in Wyoming. These summits have led to a monthly Wyoming Farm-to-Plate newsletter that is distributed statewide to all stakeholders as our initial method to maintain open communication and develop connectivity around our geographically and population dispersed state. The Farm-to-Plate Task Force continues to meet quarterly through teleconference calls.

Community impact: Through this communication tool, multiple schools connected with local producers and are now serving local items in their cafeteria. The newsletter has also served to distribute a calendar of events occurring throughout the state including GAP certification education, Farm-to-School workshops, and local food conferences. This group has created a forum to share ideas, successful, and address challenges collaboratively throughout Wyoming.

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, 2016). Include further explanation if necessary.**

Direct intended beneficiaries include Wyoming small and mid-sized producers interested in selling goods through wholesale markets in Wyoming and local food buyers interested in purchasing local food. There are over 11,000 small and mid-sized farms in Wyoming who could potential benefit from a food hub network. The project reached 71 producers, of which, 31 are interested in working with a food hub. Twenty-one wholesale buyers participated in the survey, of which, 13 expressed interest in working directly with a food hub.

Number of direct jobs created: Each individual food hub would create direct jobs through its own employment. A small food hub, in each cluster area, would likely require 1 to 2 FTE staff members, including a general manager/sales manager, a production/warehouse manager, and other hourly workers. These hourly workers will serve as warehouse staff, delivery drivers, and marketing and sales support personnel.

Number of jobs retained: A food hub would provide market opportunity for many of the small and mid-sized farmers and wholesale buyers in Wyoming. Developing the local food system would benefit these businesses and retain many of the jobs needed for their operation.

Number of indirect jobs created: Indirect beneficiaries include Wyoming communities interested in promoting local food and agriculture and consumers whom purchase from and support local food businesses. Specifically, local food hubs generate indirect employment by spurring expanded local food production. Interested producers and buyers could create new jobs to support expansion into the local food market. To meet year round demand, producer must invest in production expansion and season extension. Thirty-five growers stated they had the potential to expand production, which would warrant new jobs to meet this expansion. Season extension requires workers early and late in the growing season. This will increase the number of jobs created through the development of a food hub network. According to a 2010 University of Wisconsin-Madison study, 2.2 jobs are created for every $100,000 in local food sales. The previous study identified approximately $26M in wholesale local food demand. A food hub network that eventually meets this unmet demand would indirectly generate an additional 572 harvest, post-harvest and distribution-related jobs, supporting growers in the state.

Number of markets expanded: The identified communities in Wyoming all currently operate a local farmers' market. Our efforts would expand these markets beyond direct-to-consumer to wholesale channels, establishing larger volumes and more consistent purchasing schedule.

Number of new markets established: Throughout the study, six cluster areas, consisting of over twelve communities, emerged as potential "sub-hubs" and markets for the local food hub network. No markets were expanded yet, but this research will support further development in each of these geographic regions of Wyoming.

Market sales increased by $0 and increased by 0%. Several studies have been conducted on representative food hubs across the country to calculate their economic multiplier impact. Ken Meter's research suggests that food hubs have a 2.6x multiplier. Recent USDA research suggests a 1.63x multiplier (after accounting for the negative impact of replacing current purchasing habits with local food purchasing). These metrics will be used to measure impact of a food hub network in Wyoming.

Number of farmers/producers that have benefited from the project: The team collected surveys from 71 surveys from local producers, 31 are interested in working with a food hub. If a network of food hubs were developed, these respondents would all be potential beneficiaries, including the six clusters and twelve identified communities.

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?**

Through the study outreach, we have received attention in other markets in and around low income/low access populations interested in developing their local food system. Interested Wyoming communities including: Cody, Lovell, Worland, Thermopolis, Lander, Riverton, Rock Springs, Wheatland, Gillette, Glenrock, Casper, Sheridan, Laramie, and Cheyenne. We also have received interest from Wyoming businesses supplying value-added products. Outside of Wyoming we have received interest from communities in Montana, Idaho, Colorado, and Nebraska. These connections were made through the survey instrument and Farm-to-Plate Task Force summits.

4. **Discuss your community partnerships.**

Community partners include the following organizations:

a. Prevention Management Organization of Wyoming – Natrona County Office
b. City of Casper
c. Wyoming Survey Analysis Center (WYSAC)
d. Wyoming Business Council – Agribusiness Department
e. Wyoming Department of Agriculture
f. Wyoming Department of Education
g. Teton County School District - Food Service Director
h. Sweetwater County School District – Food Service Director
i. Wyoming Medical Center
j. Triple Crown Commodities
k. Wyoming Farmers' Market Association
l. University of Wyoming – Agriculture Extension
m. Wyoming Master Gardeners
n. Lincoln County School District
o. Sublette County School District
p. Shoshone River Farms
q. Lloyd Craft Farms
r. Big Horn County School District
s. Forward Cody
t. Fremont County School District
u. Lander Local Fest
v. Sheridan County School District - Food Service Director
w. Holliday Family Farms
x. Sheridan Memorial Hospital
y. Powder River Basin Resources Council
z. Natrona County School District
aa. Wyoming Food Bank of the Rockies
bb. Casper Area Economic Development Alliance
cc. Laramie County School District - Food Service Director
dd. Wyoming Cent$ible Nutrition

ii. **How have they contributed to the results you've already achieved**?

These organizations have assisted in survey outreach to producers and buyers in Wyoming, have provided information on local food infrastructure, and have positioned themselves to expand our local food system efforts into their businesses and communities through participation in the Wyoming Farm-to-Plate Task Force.

iii. **How will they contribute to future results**?

Our community partners will continue to assist our efforts in expanding the local food system in Wyoming through funding, collaboration, and future outreach. We have identified lead stakeholder organizations in each cluster area that will help to continue local food and food hub development beyond the scope of this grant period.

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

The project team conducting this study has collaborated with New Venture Advisors, LLC (NVA). NVA worked closely with our project team to strategically plan and execute the currently study. NVA co-presented at our initial Wyoming Farm-to-Plate Task Force meeting. NVA created the survey tool and currently maintains the data from our producer and buyer surveys. NVA also assists in project management and survey outreach for the study, as well as data analysis and report creation.

6. **Have you publicized any results yet?** The results of the study are published.

i. **If yes, how did you publicize the results?**
Results were published online via our website, freshfoodswyoming.com, and in the Wyoming Farm-to-Plate Task Force newsletter.

ii. **To whom did you publicize the results?**
Results were published and distributed to the Farm-to-Plate Task Force stakeholders, producers, and wholesale buyers.

iii. **How many stakeholders (i.e. people, entities) did you reach?**
Currently, there are 167 stakeholders that participate in Task Force conversations.

7. **Have you collected any feedback from your community and additional stakeholders about your work? If so, how did you collect the information?**

Feedback was formally gathered through survey outreach to producers and buyers in Wyoming and an initial stakeholder meeting held Oct. 17th, 2015. We have received informal feedback through phone interviews and Farm-to-Plate Task Force stakeholder forums.

i. **What feedback was relayed (specific comments)?**

Open-ended comments suggest that many of the non-certified growers employ sustainable growing practices.

- *Not interested in certified at this point. All methods used on farm would easily allow for certification.*
- *Farm is not certified organic, but we do NOT use any pesticides or herbicides. All natural.*
- *Nothing certified, but 95% grown with organic practices.*
- *Too costly for a small operation, but compliance with the NOP.*
- *Was certified. After 5 years decided the cost of certification wasn't paying for itself. Still grow organic.*
- *[Certified organic] could be done without significant changes to operation.*
- *Not certified but raised using organic principles without the use of chemical fertilizers. All pesticides used are OMRI approved.*
- *We are Bio-intensive, hoping to go organic.*

Open-ended responses to barriers to market entry include:

- *Price is important. Would increase production if markets are there.*
- *We have a limited supply each year so it will be hard to expand.*

- *We still have expansion in our current markets.*
- *Cannot increase production without willing labor*

Other issues and comments flagged in open-ended responses include:

- *Seasonality: A short growing season is our biggest challenge for expansion.*
- *If we are to size up to meet demand we need more labor, better infrastructure and on farm (or co-op) processing capability.*

Many who are “somewhat interested” articulated in their comments that their interest level depends on how the hub is structured and what the pricing strategy would be. Additionally, several suggested that they are already working with a CSA program and consider this to be a food hub.

- *I could increase production. May not be worth it if hub price is not sufficient to cover costs.*
- *I feel Wyoming meat products are extremely high quality and very marketable to consumers.*
- *Have not been able to go to the next level of local small groceries or restaurants.*
- *Our products have a very short availability and short "shelf life".*
- *Most wholesale prices are not high enough to keep small, local farms profitable.*

Representative comments about local purchasing include:

- *I will purchase from the farmers market in the summer, but am only able to access farm fresh eggs during the winter months.*
- *Easier to buy from distributor since I need a large amount*

Final open-ended feedback from buyers.

- *Food safety and traceability are a MUST for schools. Keeping prices low for schools.*
- *No one is pounding on my door to buy local, they are patting my back on controlling costs.*
- *We would look forward to helping in any way with this project!*

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: ☒

Total amount spent: $47,972.63

Personnel:	$11,160.50
Contractual:	$35,950.00
Equipment Purchases:	
Travel:	$862.13
Supplies:	
Other:	
Indirect Costs:	
TOTAL:	$47,972.63

Amount of matching/in-kind: $22,972.63

Personnel:	$6,622.80
Contractual:	$15,950.00
Equipment Purchases:	
Travel:	$399.83
Supplies:	
Other:	
Indirect Costs:	
TOTAL:	$22,972.63

ii. Did the project generate any income?

The project generated $0 income.

9. Lessons Learned:

i. Summarize any lessons learned.

Wyoming has a culture that promotes local food development and stakeholders see the potential of developing the local food system in the region, for both social and economic purposes. This momentum was captured through the stakeholder network established by the Wyoming Farm-to-Plate Task Force. The convening of this group potentiated the project and help leverage other organizations around the state, which saved the team money and helped move the project forward quicker. This network also helped the team overcome the geographic and low population obstacles a rural area like Wyoming faces with developing this scope and scale of project.

The main contributor to the success of the project was working with a well-established consulting firm with vast experience in the food hub. New Venture Advisors has developed an expert team, with a diverse skill set, whose knowledge and dedicated to local foods helped build the foundation for local food in rural Wyoming.

The team continued to struggle with survey outreach to the producer demographic. This could have been due to limited access to producers because survey instrument was mainly distributed through electronic email. To overcome this challenge, the team conducted more in-person outreach through conventions and conferences around the state visited by small and mid-sized producers interested in selling locally.

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

All goals were achieved to the level project team and stakeholders were very happy and extracted value from. Lessons learned from previous research that were employed throughout this project included development of scope of work between the core team and consultant and specifying SMART goals and objectives. This helped the project team understand team roles and have objective measures outlined to achieve stated goals.

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:

The most effective tool the project team employed was utilizing the stakeholder network to distribute and collect information concerning the local food system in Wyoming. Other organizations interested in this type of research, particularly in rural areas, should focus on network development and stakeholder engagement to ensure regional and statewide buy-in for overall project success.

10. Future Work:

i. How will you continue the work of this project beyond the performance period?

This research provided an initial foundation for wholesale food hub in Wyoming, particularly Casper and Cheyenne. The study identified high levels of unmet demand for local food in a region and that locally produced supply is far below the potential consumer demand for Wyoming farm products. However, buyers are limited in their ability to purchase local goods. Interviewed and surveyed institutional buyers face a number of unique constraints, such as pricing, product availability, insurance requirements, and contracts that prevent them from purchasing local at high volumes. Additionally, almost all buyers indicated that they are not yet seeing a tremendous demand for local, which matches data that consumer preference for local food in Wyoming is currently below national averages. Two identified reasons for low consumer demand include limited awareness of available Wyoming products and buyer price sensitivity to local foods. This suggests that any food hub efforts should be coupled with strategies that result in an increased consumer preference for local.

Future work to develop the local food system in Wyoming includes increasing consumer demand through brand development, promotion, and marketing campaigns for local food in Wyoming. It is premature to make a specific recommendation as to what the statewide brand should be; however, there appears to be strong momentum for a Grown in Wyoming brand, and this effort is backed by relatively strong public resources.

This study also suggested the development of an and analysis tool to help quantify current economic activity of local foods in Wyoming that will continue to build upon previous research and maintain trends year-to-year. Addressing the current economic activities and impacts of foods grown and sold in Wyoming can help establish a baseline and future trends for improved agricultural, economic, and potentially health outcomes in the state. Currently, data is gathered through USDA AMS, but there is limited information about Farmers' Market and direct-to-consumer activity, which is a good barometer for local food activity. This baseline will help policy makers, local food investors, and local food marketing and promotion projects focused on selling, advertising, promoting, marketing, and generating publicity around local food attract new customers and/or raise customer awareness of local foods and specialty crops, and possibly increase fruit vegetable consumption for Wyoming citizens.

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?

It is recommended that food hub development in the state be pursued in ways that build on the strong initial foundations within each cluster, moving each of them forward strategically to expand their sales and hopefully catalyze both production and demand within their cluster. Over time, cluster hubs would expand their presence, serving a unique role based on the assets and opportunities within their cluster.

It is also recommended that a statewide entity be explored/ established that provides a myriad of services to support the establishment and expansion of hubs in each cluster. These services would include, but would not be limited to: market development; food hub business model development and general business support; facilitation of hub-to-hub transactions; expansion of production and supply; financial support through lending partners and grants; and regulatory and liability insurance assistance.