

FY 2014

\$100,000 to Everyone's Harvest, Marina, CA, to increase quality of services and product offerings at six farmers markets in Monterey County, CA.

**Final Report**

Farmers Market Promotion Program  
Final Performance Report  
For the Period of September 30, 2014 – September 29, 2016

Date: 28-Dec-17  
Recipient Name: Everyone's Harvest  
Project Title: Monterey County Farmers Market Promotion Project  
Grant Number: 14-FMPPX-CA-0011  
Project Location: Marina, CA  
Year of Grant Award: 2014  
Amount Awarded: \$100,000  
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Program Summary: Compared to 2013, the year before the Monterey County Farmers' Market Promotion Project started,

- Total EBT Sales increased by 24% to \$16,154, exceeding Everyone's Harvest's proposed goal of \$15,000 per year. (Upon further analysis, the stated goal of 50% increase in EBT sales were based on EBT data that were incorrect. EH redeemed just over \$10,000 in EBT in 2013.)
- Total Annual Market Sales increased by 16.5% to \$552,844 in 2016, exceeding Everyone's Harvest proposed goal of 12% growth.

These results were achieved by a coordinated effort by Everyone's Harvest and its partner organizations to provide education and technical assistance to farmers, create new value-added products to extend and improve market sales, and invest in partnerships and outreach to expand the consumption of regionally grown agricultural products among low-income families receiving food assistance.

More than 2,000 families are served weekly by Everyone's Harvest markets in Salinas, Marina, and Pacific Grove – with more than 25 small and mid-scale farmers serving them. The farmers' market locations serve diverse communities and low-income people.

Goals and Objectives:

"Everyone's Harvest's (EH) Monterey County Farmers' Market Promotion Project objective is to generate strong direct outlet sales and success at farmers' markets serving Low Income/Low Access (LI/LA) Areas (Tract #0605301402 and #06053000400) and other areas by:

- Providing education and technical assistance for farmers – Goal #1: Increase marketing knowledge and skills of farmers, with an objective to engage 15 farmers in training and technical assistance. This work is important because EH farmers both come from and serve working class and low income areas, and they face language, cultural, and economic barriers that effect their marketing abilities. Without these activities, EH Farmers would continue to face challenges to understand and meet the needs of market customers.
- Creating new value-added products to extend and improve market sales – Goal #2: Establish farmers’ production and sales of new regionally grown value-added agricultural products. This work is important because customer surveys conducted prior to the grant period indicated consumer demand for more direct producer-to-customer products, especially during the winter months. EH Customer Counts revealed a 58% decrease in consumer base during the winter. These new products, combined with the popularity of regular EH Interactive Cooking Workshops increase sales and create more informed consumers – 96% of Cooking Workshop participants report increased confidence in preparing healthy dishes at home and 84% plan to eat more fresh fruits and vegetables as a result of these healthy cooking workshops.
- Investing in partnerships and outreach to expand the consumption of regionally grown agricultural products among low-income families receiving food assistance – Goal #3: Increase farmers’ direct sales by 12%, markets’ customer base by 25% and markets’ EBT transactions by 50%. This work is important because EH Certified Farmers’ Markets serve LI/LA areas where access to fresh fruits and vegetables is scarce. Furthermore, these major outreach and partnership initiatives are crucial to the growth and stability of EH and the long-term impacts of the Monterey County Farmers’ Market Promotion Project.

#### Activities:

Below is a summary of Everyone’s Harvest’s Activities regarding these objectives from September 30, 2014 through September 30, 2016.

Goal #1: Increase marketing knowledge and skills of farmers, with an objective to engage 15 farmers in training and technical assistance:

All activities relating to Goal #1 – Activity 1 ‘to conduct farmer trainings and individual coaching to increase farmers’ knowledge and skill to successfully market their existing agricultural products produced’ were successfully completed.

Everyone’s Harvest conducted eleven (11) customer service trainings at the Certified Farmers’ Markets (CFM’s) led by outside marketing professionals. 26 vendors and farm businesses attended these trainings. 90% of participants responded in post-training surveys that the sessions improved their customer service skills and would help to strengthen relationships with their clients. A comprehensive bilingual customer service manual was designed, printed, and distributed for current and future vendors.

Everyone's Harvest conducted one training related to Goal #1 – Activity 2 'to increase farmers' knowledge and skills to learn how to successfully market new value-added products.' As a result of this training, it became apparent to EH Staff that farmers lacked the capital and time needed to produce value-added products on their own, especially since the location of the commercial kitchen had to be changed due to unforeseen complications. At this point, EH Staff took it upon themselves to initiate value-added production, and the remaining two proposed trainings were not completed.

Goal #2: Establish farmers' production and sales of new regionally grown value-added agricultural products:

Everyone's Harvest successfully completed Goal #2 – Activity 1 'to conduct trainings for five (5) farmers to increase knowledge and skills to produce value-added products and determine which products are most suited for processing for each farmer involved.'

Everyone's Harvest did not complete Goal #2 – Activity 2 'to develop rental agreement for a commercial kitchen and pilot the production and sales of value-added products for up to 32 hours per month.'

Once it became clear that EH farmers would not be able to immediately begin production during the time period, EH Staff initiated production of value-added products and pursued an agreement with the commercial kitchen. The limiting factor was the slow response of California Department of Public Health to EH requests for kitchen certification.

Everyone's Harvest (EH) staff completed the necessary ServSafe classes and exams for authorization to work in the El Pajaro Commercial Kitchen in Watsonville, CA. Through multiple meetings Everyone's Harvest reached an agreement to begin production of value-added products at the El Pajaro Commercial Kitchen. On August 17, 2016, the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) reached out to conduct an inspection for Everyone's Harvest's Processed Food Registration (PFR). This application for a PFR had been submitted in the fall of 2015.

In June 2016, however, Everyone's Harvest had re-applied for the Processed Food Registration (PFR) due to a change of commercial kitchens and because CDPH had not responded to the original PFR application, despite repeated emails and phone calls. CDPH did not conduct the Processed Food Registration Inspection at El Pajaro Commercial Kitchen before the end of the grant period (September 30, 2016).

EH successfully completed Goal #2 – Activity 3 'to promote value-added products and conduct 22 healthy interactive cooking workshops.'

Everyone's Harvest partnered with local chefs to host workshops, provide nutrition information, and promote local produce. 96% of the participants report increased confidence in preparing healthy dishes at home and 84% plan to eat more fresh fruits and vegetables as a result of these healthy cooking workshops.

What makes Everyone's Harvest workshops unique is that all participants play a role in preparing the meal. Each participant receives a \$10 produce voucher to buy fresh fruits and vegetables at the farmers' market to encourage healthy eating at home. "Because of Everyone's Harvest, my children and I shop

together and eat vegetables we didn't even know were edible!" reported Nancy Castellanos, Marina resident, mother of four.

To create future conditions in which Everyone's Harvest and its farmers and stakeholders can best achieve Goal #2 – Activity 4 'to continue processing and sales of farmer-branded agricultural value-added products,' EH will allow Rodriguez Ranch use of the commercial dehydrator purchased in June.

Rodriguez Ranch is a longtime Everyone's Harvest partner, and they grow organic produce suitable for dehydration within 20 miles of EH markets. Everyone's Harvest has provided Rodriguez Ranch with information gained by our own attempts at value-added production and the tools necessary to begin producing new products. By conducting research and development, initiating value-added food production, and partnering with Rodriguez Ranch, a veteran organic farmer and stakeholder in EH's Certified Farmers Markets, EH has increased the likelihood of value-added products being made available in our markets year-round.

Goal #3: Increase farmers' direct sales by 12%, markets' customer base by 25% and markets' EBT transactions by 50%.

EH successfully completed Goal #3 – Activity 1 'to leverage partnerships and create an BT outreach and promotion plan including a documentary highlighting farmers and markets for presentations in LI/LA areas.'

This outreach plan built on Everyone's Harvest's established relationships with local healthcare and community organizations and schools to increase awareness of farmers' markets and regionally grown agricultural products. The documentary was shown at presentations with these partner organizations (see below) and featured on the EH website, social media, and YouTube channel. The documentary featured many local organizations doing great work in Monterey County's local food movement, including EH partner organizations Agriculture and Land-Based Training Association (ALBA), Salinas Valley Memorial Healthcare System (SVMH), and Community Alliance with Family Farmers (CAFF).

EH successfully completed Goal #3 – Activity 2 'to implement EBT/WIC Outreach Promotion including direct mailings, full color rack cards, media outreach, and public transportation advertisements in LI/LA areas.'

In 2015, EH staff coordinated the design, production, and distribution of 10,000 farmers' market postcards promoting EBT acceptance at the Marina and Pacific Grove CFM's.

In 2016, EH staff coordinated the design, production, and distribution of farmers' market postcards promoting EBT acceptance at the three Salinas farmers' markets sent directly through a mailing service to 19,700 residents living in Salinas, with zip codes aligning to the three neighborhoods where EH Certified Farmers' Markets are located. As a result of this outreach, marketing efforts, and the creation of repeat shoppers, EH saw EBT redemptions at our markets increase by 173% from Quarter 2 to Quarter 3 of 2016. Over this six-month period, EH redeemed \$9,872 of EBT at our 5 Certified Farmers' Markets.

EH also advertised its CFM's and EBT acceptance on Monterey-Salinas Transit Buses. Previous research by EH revealed that word-of-mouth and signage on site are the most effective for advertising its CFM's. "

EH successfully completed Goal #3 – Activity 3 ‘to conduct outreach with partners in LI/LA areas through one-hour community presentations including EH’s Local Food Movement documentary, healthy interactive cooking workshops, and promotion of EH markets and EBT acceptance.’

Everyone’s Harvest built on established relationships with local healthcare and community organizations and schools to increase awareness of farmers’ markets, EBT acceptance, and regionally grown agricultural products. Everyone’s Harvest completed 22 Community Presentations with partners and other community groups reaching over 1200 people, the majority of whom live in LI/LA areas. Each workshop educated participants on the importance of certified farmers’ markets and supporting small-scale farmers.

#### Accomplishments:

Everyone’s Harvest conducted eleven (11) customer service trainings at the Certified Farmers’ Markets (CFM’s) led by outside marketing professionals. 26 vendors and farm businesses attended these trainings. 90% of participants responded in post-training surveys that the sessions improved their customer service skills and would help to strengthen relationships with their clients

Everyone’s Harvest successfully conducted trainings for five (5) farmers to increase knowledge and skills to produce value-added products and determine which products are most suited for processing for each farmer involved.

EH successfully conducted 22 healthy interactive cooking workshops with an average of 15 participants per workshop.

In 2015, EH staff coordinated the design, production, and distribution of 10,000 farmers’ market postcards promoting EBT acceptance at the Marina and Pacific Grove CFM’s.

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#### Beneficiaries:

Everyone’s Harvest has focused on serving low-income and underserved communities since its beginning. In Salinas, the people served are primarily Hispanic; over 800 families are served by three farmers’ markets, including two hospital locations. East Salinas or Alisal, a neighborhood where farm workers make up the majority, includes the most densely populated census tracts in Monterey County, and 26.3% of residents live below the poverty line (58% more than the statewide average). The Alisal Market operates on Tuesdays from June through September, at 632 Alisal Street, where it has been estimated that thousands of families are food insecure and 1/3 of the children are malnourished

(California Food Policy Advocates, 2005). Everyone's Harvest's markets were the first in Monterey County to accept CalFresh, the modern-day food stamp. Most shoppers are women aged 20-70 who make the market part of their weekly routines.

In Marina, the customers are more ethnically diverse, including Asian-Americans, Pacific Islanders, Southeast Asians, and Latinos. In addition to local Hispanic and other farmers, Marina's vendors include immigrants from Laos providing culturally appropriate specialty produce to the community. The market serves an average of 400 customers weekly, more than half of whom are families with children.

The Pacific Grove market operates in a more affluent community, yet CalFresh usage is on par with the less affluent Marina. The market includes 15 farmers, including Hispanic, beginning farmers and women farmers."

Everyone's Harvest provides the Alisal community a central, affordable source of fresh, local fruits and vegetables in an area with very few retailers offering fresh produce. The farmers, the majority of whom are former farm workers, converse with customers in Spanish and sell culturally appropriate produce whenever possible. The WIC program and other health-related agencies, like Champions for Change, provide nutrition education, distribute WIC vouchers, and assist qualifying residents to sign up for SNAP/CalFresh. The Alisal Certified Farmers' Market will serve at least 100 low-income Latina women responsible for the care of children in East Salinas, with a focus on those receiving nutrition assistance such as WIC and SNAP/CalFresh. Most are aged 18-30, but there are also older women, often grandmothers, who shop for their families. The market attracts approximately 200 shoppers each week, nearly all of whom are local Alisal residents who shop at the market weekly.

#### Lessons Learned:

- Everyone's Harvest would be well served by a more accurate accounting of Gross Sales. At the moment, EH relies on farmers and vendors to self-report their sales.
- In the future, Everyone's Harvest will not promise deliverables (Value-Added Products, in this case) which require the completion of an outside party. Upon learning that farmers were unable to pursue value-added production on their own, EH staff made every effort to develop these products to introduce them to the markets, but our organization is not well suited to this kind of undertaking.
- In tandem with this project, EH has created a database tracking system of EBT customers at the markets. This system identifies unique market shoppers by the last four digits of their CalFresh card, and allows EH to identify the creation of repeat shoppers and analyze shopping habits in order to better serve its customers.
- Increasing Sales is most difficult and unpredictable at the Alisal CFM, because the market economy depends so heavily on the subsidy of WIC farmers' market vouchers.

#### Results:

Compared to 2013, the year before the Monterey County Farmers' Market Promotion Project started,

- Total EBT Sales increased by 24% to \$16,154, exceeding Everyone's Harvest's proposed goal of \$15,000 per year. (Upon further analysis, the stated goal of 50% increase in EBT sales were based on EBT data that were incorrect. EH redeemed just over \$10,000 in EBT in 2013.)

- Total Annual Market Sales increased by 16.5% to \$552,844 in 2016, exceeding Everyone's Harvest proposed goal of 12% growth.
- Total Annual Market Sales increased by 9% at the Pacific Grove Certified Farmers' Market, by 20% at the Marina CFM, by 22% at Salinas Valley Memorial Healthcare CFM, by 1% at the Natividad Medical Center CFM, and by 51% at the Alisal CFM.
- Due to complications described above, Everyone's Harvest was not able to introduce new value-added products to the market.