FY 2014

$88,987 to the Community Alliance with Family Farmers, Davis, CA, to increase patronage at Central California CSAs through better outreach, marketing, and member retention.

Final Report

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

Report Date Range: *(e.g. September 30, 20XX-September 29, 20XX)*	October 1, 2014 – March 31, 2016
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Authorized Representative Phone:	5307568518 x131
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Recipient Organization Name:	Community Alliance with Family Farmers
Project Title as Stated on Grant Agreement:	Promoting CA CSAs Through Regional Networks
Grant Agreement Number: *(e.g. 15-FMPPX-XX-XXXX)*	14-FMPPX-CA 0023
Year Grant was Awarded:	2014
Project City/State:	Davis, CA
Total Awarded Budget:	$ 88,987

FMPP staff may contact you to follow up for long-term success stories. Who may we contact?
x 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 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.*

   A Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) program is a direct market program for farms in which customers purchase "shares" of a farm's crops at the beginning of the season. In turn, the customer receives a box of the farm's harvest on a regular basis, such as weekly, bi-weekly, or monthly. This model relieves the farmer of up costs and helps to develop relationships between the farmer and his / her customers. While this market strategy is advantageous to beginning farmers in particular as they grow their clientele and markets, it is becoming an increasingly challenging model due to high turnover rates and increased competition from similar types of programs. Many of these other programs are boxed produce programs run by companies that are not farmer operated. Studies have shown that there is a 30% turnover rate each year in CSA subscribers and that farmers want more connections to each other to problem solve. The Community Alliance with Family Farmers (CAFF) proposes the project "Promoting CA CSAs through Regional Networks" in order to work with farmers to understand consumer interest in CSA programs, break down barriers in making CSAs accessible, increase communication across CSA farms, develop strategies for increasing and retaining members, and increase consumer awareness of the benefits of CSAs.

   i. Goal/Objective 1: Improve CSA success and profitability by increasing membership and reducing member turnover in targeted regions.
      a. Progress Made: CAFF staff utilized numerous strategies in order to increase Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) membership and profitability. We worked with Professor Ryan Galt from UC – Davis to research the reasons for CSA membership turnover and share them with farms throughout California through workshops. CAFF used this data to support CSA farms across 4 regions (Humboldt County, Sonoma County, Sacramento Valley, and Silicon Valley). Staff provided technical assistance and marketing support directly with farms to increase and retain membership using the following tactics:
         1. Worksite Development – CAFF staff worked with 6 farms to coordinate drop off locations at key high volume worksites, particularly employment centers promoting "worksite wellness" programs and healthy eating. CAFF promoted CSA programs to employers as a way to meet healthy workplace or worksite wellness goals by making it easy for employees to purchase locally-grown, fresh fruits and vegetables directly from farms at their place of work. CAFF identified interested worksites, developed relationships with key employees to coordinate logistics and conduct outreach, and worked with farms to set up easy CSA drop off points with high volumes of customers.
         2. CSA Open Houses – CAFF held CSA open houses in 2 regions, Sonoma County and Humboldt County. The open houses were coordinated promotional events in which 7 farms across the county simultaneously opened their doors to visitors to learn about their unique CSA programs. Participants were encouraged to visit multiple farms to compare

different CSA models, prices, products, drop off locations, and more to understand which farm was the best fit for their needs.

3. Searchable Database – CAFF input data for 200 CSA farms into a database, searchable by zip code or county of pick up locations (as opposed to farm location) so that customers may determine which farms deliver close to their homes. CAFF worked with Local Harvest, a widely used website to find local food by location, to transfer data to their online platform. Local Harvest has the capacity to grow and manage the data beyond the grant period.
4. CalFresh Acceptance – CAFF staff worked with farms to navigate the state's regulations and paperwork to obtain Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT machines) in order to process CalFresh dollars from customers. Federal law indicates that CalFresh users cannot pay for the entire season's share up front, but CSA members may purchase shares up to two weeks in advance. CAFF helped farms understand how to process these memberships as they followed different methods than their other customers. Staff created a fact sheet for farms so they can understand how to process EBT payments technically and legally.

b. Impact on Community:

1. Worksite Development – CAFF was successful in getting 6 farms to establish customers at 8 worksites. Earthly Edibles, Shakefork Community Farm, and Good Humus established the worksites as drop off locations. Eating with the Seasons CSA, Higher Ground Organics, and Spade & Plow had individual employees sign up for shares in their existing CSA programs. With CAFF's support in coordinating these worksites, farms were able to establish a new drop off location that generated tens of thousands of dollars in customer shares (see table A).

Table A. REVENUES GENERATED FROM WORKSITE DEVELOPMENT PER FARM

Farm	Worksite(s)	Revenues Generated
Earthly Edibles	GHD, Humboldt State University, Humboldt County Office of Education	$23,100
Shakefork Community Farm	St. Joseph's Hospital	$11,300
Good Humus	Davis City Offices	$10,560
Eating with the Seasons CSA	Tesla, Oracle	$11,988
Higher Ground Organics	LinkedIn	$864
Spade & Plow	LinkedIn	$1080
	TOTAL	**$58,892**

2. CSA Open House – 250 to 300 people attended the Humboldt County CSA Open House, visiting at least 1 of 7 farms. Earthly Edibles said that 3 people wanted to join after the Open House. Organic Matters Ranch said 75% of 100 attendees at their farm inquired about signing up. DeepSeeded Farm said 10 inquired about signing up, and 5 e-mailed to get on the list. Redwood Roots Farm said 12 people inquired about signing up. Shakefork Community Farm said 10 people asked for commitment form. In Sonoma County, 61 people attended the CSA Open House, despite inclement weather. Across the 2 regions, data was

collected to understand the impact of the open house on CSA memberships. 92% of participants interviewed said that they had not been a member of a CSA program before. Of those who had not been a CSA member previously, 55% said they would definitely join in the next season and an additional 32% said they might join. Finally, 67% said the open house influenced their decision to sign up for a CSA. One attendee indicated, “"This open house gives us an opportunity to shop around. We have been a member of the same farm for 4 years and we are interested in what else is out there."

3. Searchable Database – CAFF has input over 200 farms into the database and transferred data to the Local Harvest website. Over 7 million people visit the Local Harvest website and search the directory annually. Consumers may now find CSAs that have pick up locations near their home on this widely used and popular website.
4. CalFresh Acceptance – See goal / objective 2.

ii. Goal/Objective 2: Develop new market opportunities for CSAs by expanding EBT-SNAP use in CSAs.

a. Progress Made: CAFF approached 17 farms to determine if they were interested in obtaining EBT machines. Obtaining EBT machines allows farms to sell their products to low-income consumers on CalFresh (formerly food stamps). CAFF worked with USDA Food and Nutrition Services and the CA Department of Social Services (CDSS) to understand how CSA farms can accept CalFresh and apply for machines. CAFF discovered that California is one of a few states that provide farms and farmers markets with EBT machines free of charge. CAFF outreached to farms to notify them of this benefit and worked with the farmers and CDSS to navigate the paperwork. In addition, CAFF worked with partners to conduct outreach to CalFresh users to let them know that that CSA programs at particular farms now accept EBT. Finally, CAFF trained 10 farmers in Santa Cruz on how to get EBT machines and accept CalFresh dollars.
b. Impact on Community: Of the 17 farms that CAFF approached to see if they were interested in accepting CalFresh, 5 farms have completed the process and obtained EBT machines. The 5 farms that have obtained the EBT machines have collectively earned at least $5,150 in additional sales from CalFresh users. An additional 4 farms are currently in the application process.

iii. Goal/Objective 3: Increase accessibility for consumers to on-line information about California CSAs. This will also increase consumption of locally grown produce in CA.

a. Progress Made: CAFF promoted CSA programs generally and for specific farms in targeted communities as well as through an online CSA Network. Examples of outlets include:
    - 25 Facebook posts promoting regional CSA programs
    - 3 press releases promoting farms that have recently become CalFresh accessible
    - 2 news stories promoting CSAs on local TV in Humboldt County
    - 2 listings on community calendars for CSA Open Houses
    - 1 radio interview
    - 20 blog posts

- 3 newspaper articles
- 25 CSA farm profiles developed
- 8 CSA farm features in CAFF e-newsletters
- 1 feature in the Farmers' Guild Cookbook

Additionally, CAFF created marketing materials to promote CSA programs that staff distributed to farms, partners, and the public. Materials include flyers promoting CalFresh acceptance on farms, CSA flyers to promote within worksites, open house brochures, and EBT acceptance signs for farms.

b. Impact on Community: Through a variety of social media and traditional media outlets, CAFF made at least 503,682 impressions on the public to promote CSA programs. These impressions educated individuals about the CSA model and the economic benefits of CSAs.

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, 2014). Include further explanation if necessary.*
   i. Number of direct jobs created: 0
   ii. Number of jobs retained: 18
   iii. Number of indirect jobs created: 0
   iv. Number of markets expanded: 19
   5 farms were able to expand their CSA program to low-income populations by getting EBT machines and through promotions to CalFresh users, and 14 farms expanded their CSA programs through participating in the regional open houses.
   v. Number of new markets established: 6
   6 farms were able to establish new markets by working with CAFF to develop worksite drop off locations for their CSA programs,
   vi. Market sales increased by $64,042 and increased by 64042%.
   vii. Number of farmers/producers that have benefited from the project: 18
      a. Percent Increase: The number of farmers that have benefited from the project has increased from 1 to 18. Prior to the project, one of the farms we worked with already had an EBT machine. During the project we were able to help 17 new farms develop worksites, gain CalFresh accessibility, participate in open houses, promote their CSAs, and more.

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?*

   Yes. The project expanded the customer bases of several farms' CSA programs by accessing 2 new populations: worksites and CalFresh users. Because it requires a considerable amount of work to identify contacts, coordinate logistics, and conduct outreach within the workplace, farmers typically do not have the time to organize worksite CSA locations. CAFF's support help to organize worksites simply as a drop off location for their regular CSA programs, making it easy for the farms to expand their markets to a new audience. In addition, CAFF worked with farms to help them apply for Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) machines to be able to accept CalFresh, understand how to legally process CalFresh payments using the CSA model, and outreach to potential customers that use CalFresh dollars. Being able to accept CalFresh has allowed many of these farms to be able to reach low-income residents that previously did not have access to their fresh, locally grown food through the CSA program.

4. *Discuss your community partnerships.*
   i. Who are your community partners?
      - The Health Trust
      - Sacred Heart Community Service
      - Veggielution
      - Santa Clara County Department of Public Health
      - College of the Redwoods
      - North Coast Growers Association
      - Food for People
      - Open Door Community Health Centers, Humboldt County
      - USDA Food and Nutrition Services
      - CA Department of Social Services
      - Fair Share CSA Coalition
      - Local Harvest
      - Professor Ryan Galt, UC – Davis

   ii. How have they contributed to the overall results of the FMPP project?
      - The Health Trust, Sacred Heart Community Service, Veggielution, and Santa Clara County Department of Public Health were instrumental in helping us distribute an EBT brochure in the Santa Clara Valley.
      - College of the Redwoods, North Coast Growers Association, Food for People, and Open Door Community Health Centers in Humboldt County all helped to promote the CSA programs accepting CalFresh through social media, news, tabling, and their networks. These organizations were instrumental in getting word out to CalFresh users that they can now use their benefits to purchase fresh, locally-grown food at CSA programs.
      - USDA Food and Nutrition Services and the CA Department of Social Services worked with CAFF to navigate paperwork and administrative challenges in helping farms get EBT machines and process payments.
      - Fair Share CSA Coalition helped to learn from and share strategies for supporting CSA farms' retention and recruitment rates across 4 states.
      - Local Harvest has imported the data about CSA programs and their pick up locations into their searchable database.
      - Professor Ryan Galt, UC – Davis has worked with CAFF staff on researching CSA recruitment and retention rates and has collaborated on sharing data at workshops throughout California.

   iii. How will they continue to contribute to your project's future activities, beyond the performance period of this FMPP grant?

      Fair Share CSA Coalition will continue to work with CAFF and other organizations operating statewide CSA networks on sharing lessons learned and best practices for retaining and recruiting CSA members. In addition, now that the farms have EBT machines, the listed regional organizations (The Health Trust, Sacred Heart Community Service, Veggielution, College of the Redwoods, North Coast Growers Association, Food for People, and Open Door Community Health Centers in Humboldt County) will still continue to conduct outreach to CalFresh users to direct them to those farms for future

seasons beyond the grant period. All of these organizations have core missions of ensuring that low-income populations have access to healthy food and are committed to continuing promotions of the CSA programs that accept CalFresh. Finally, Local Harvest will continue to promote and manage listings of the 200 CSA farms listed in their database beyond the grant period.

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

   Yes. The primary project manager, Erin Derden-Little, transitioned off of the CAFF staff at the end of 2015. She became an independent contractor and helped to finish the process of getting some of the farms to complete their applications for EBT machines.

6. Have you publicized any results yet?* Yes
   i. If yes, how did you publicize the results?
      CAFF has distributed information learned, strategies for CSA recruitment and retention, and resources through workshops and online. CAFF made resources that we have distributed to farms about how to accept CalFresh (see Attachment A – EBT Fact Sheet). We collaborated with Professor Ryan Galt from UC Davis to gather this data and deliver the workshops.

   ii. To whom did you publicize the results? CAFF as made all resources and results available through the California CSA Network website and blog and on the CSA page of CAFF's website. On the website we have included a summary of Ryan Galt's research to help CSA farms understand reasons for membership turnover.

   iii. How many stakeholders (i.e. people, entities) did you reach? At least 93 people representing over 40 farms attended 6 CSA workshops throughout the state to learn about CSA member turnover and retention.

   *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?
   iv. If so, how did you collect the information?
      Yes, we conducted surveys after the CSA open house and captured qualitative comments from farmers participating in the project.

   v. What feedback was relayed (specific comments)?
      While some farms are hesitant to share exact sales data and records with a third party, many have told us about the interest they received after the open houses One participant of an open house said that he has been a CSA member of the same farm for 4 years and is ready to see what else is out there. He was grateful for the opportunity to visit farms with CSA programs to find the best fit for his family. Another participants said, "We were very excited to hear CAFF was helping farmers with EBT authorization. I

was a single mother in college and was on foodstamps so now I'm really pleased to be able to offer it for the community I love."

8. Budget Summary:
   vi. 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: ☐
   vii. 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).

      Staff have found that strategies used in this project, such as worksite development, CalFresh accessibility, and open houses, are resource intensive strategies to increase membership recruitment and retention rates for the traditional CSA program. These strategies work well in rural areas (such as Sonoma County and Humboldt County) in which people live in close proximity to farms. In areas such as Silicon Valley and Sacramento Valley that are more urban, the strategies were not as well received as there are many competing produce box programs, and the traditional CSA model is being replaced by start up businesses that are capitalizing on the local food movement. CSA farms are beginning to learn from technology companies that are making their programs easier for customers to access fresh food and are figuring out how to adapt their model to consumer needs. For example, growers in Sonoma County are discussing different models in which consumers get to choose their pre-paid produce on site, like a farm stand. Ultimately, CSA farms either have to work closely with community partners to keep attracting members to their traditional programs or adapt their models to be ore competitive with other non-traditional programs that are easier and more accessible to consumers.

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

      All goals and outcomes have been achieved.

   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:

      It takes a lot of time and persistence in working with farms to help them apply for EBT machines. We have encountered many challenges in completing the process with farms as they have many competing priorities. While it is simple for production farms to apply for and receive EBT machines, many of the interested CSA programs are on farms that follow different models, such as non-profit farms, city-owned farms, college based farms, etc. They often require additional burdensome paperwork, and staff take a long time to follow through on finishing the application as a result.

10. Future Work:

viii. 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.

CAFF is working to determine how to best support direct market growers at the state level. Through this project we have heard from farmers that it is valuable to have support from CAFF in marketing their CSA programs to the public and in providing one on one technical assistance to increase retention and recruitment rates. The next step for the program is to determine how to take the lessons learned from this project in which we were able to help 18 farms generate over $40,000 in new revenues and replicate or scale up the work efficiently to benefit more farms around the state. There clearly is still an expressed need from growers for support in marketing their CSA programs and retaining members, and CAFF is shaping a strategy to benefit more growers widely without using intensive resources with one business. We will continue to promote CSA farms that we have worked with, particularly those that now accept CalFresh.

ix. 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?

CAFF recommends that future projects focus efforts on the high profit strategies for CSA farms: worksite development, open houses, and CalFresh acceptability, particularly in rural areas. Urban areas like the Bay Area and Silicon Valley have too many easy options and less of a connection to between consumers and farms. CSA farms have also repeatedly ask for more marketing support, including tighter messaging to help consumers understand why it is important to support true CSA programs that are connected to one farm.