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Recipient Organization Name:	Resource Conservation & Development for Northeast Iowa, Inc
Project Title as Stated on Grant Agreement:	Expanding Northeast Iowa's Farmers Market System
Grant Agreement Number: <i>(e.g. 14-FMPPX-XX-XXXX)</i>	14-FMPPX-IA-0056
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Project City/State:	Postville, IA
Total Awarded Budget:	\$94,745

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: Josh Dansdill; Email: Dansdill@northeastiowarcd.org ; Phone: 563-864-7112

i. Goal: Expand the Northeast Iowa Farmers Market System

Objective 1: **Create and Facilitate a Farmers Market Advisory Council**

a. *Progress Made:* In the beginning of the project, the Farmers Market Advisory Council (FMAC) was formed with 18 members from each of the seven counties included in the project area. The FMAC formally met six times over the course of the project and Regional Farmers Market Coordinator, Josh Dansdill, facilitated additional group sharing and communications via emails, phone and one-on-one meetings with FMAC members. The development of the FMAC fostered important communication in two ways.

1. It brought together a diverse group of professionals specifically vendors, market managers, and economic development and tourism leaders that had rarely communicated in the past, providing a "safe" space to share information, voice concerns and discuss, strategize and maximize partnership opportunities.
2. Provided a time for "horizontal solution sharing" (i.e. market managers talking with marketing managers, vendors talking to vendors, etc.) from across the region to discuss issues, ideas, and solutions to common problems as well as share success stories

The facilitated FMAC dialog included the following:

- The process to create a regional brand and the corresponding marketing strategies that could benefit the markets collectively and individually. i.e. creation of a "Northeast Iowa's Farmers Market" brand that all markets used in tandem with a new expansive photo library also developed through this project – both the development of the brand and the photo shoots were directed by the FMAC
- understanding the importance of farmers' market location to the integrity of the brand
- Benefits of and strategies to regulate the type and origin of market products
- The pros and cons of allowing vendors to sell products they didn't produce

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- Diversification of partnerships and how to build the understanding of the socio-economic benefits of the farmers markets
- Marketing or business classes and workshops that counties could offer for producers/vendors to assist with business development pertaining to farmers markets
- Why, how and who of entertainment and cooking demonstrations
- New vendor recruitment, benefits and training needs
- Useful equipment and supplies for individual markets and collective use of equipment by multiple markets
- Creating financial sustainability for the market

Overall the creation of the Farmers Market Advisory Council and the facilitation of pertinent discussion successfully resulted in expansion and improvement of Northeast Iowa's farmers market system through:

- **Independent market growth** –each market gleaned helpful information from the discussions to apply to their own. I.E. Through the FMAC meetings, many individual markets realized the importance of recording sales data for their own records but also when working with city officials.
- **Collective growth** - the development of partnerships helped communities better identify the value that farmers markets provide Northeast Iowa's small communities and how to communicate that value to the public. Getting tourism and economic development personnel involved in the FMAC increased promotion of farmers markets and also made the vendors and managers realize the importance of economic development to their markets.
- **Physical Expansion of the Northeast Iowa's Farmers Market** - this project helped with the creation of 1 additional farmers market and the development of 1 additional farmers market

b. *Impact on Community:* The Farmers Market Advisory Council participated in a regional branding effort that became a successful exercise in changing public perception of the markets. Prior to the project many Northeast Iowa markets were considered outdoor grocery stores rather than dynamic community hubs. The professional branding and marketing encouraged interaction and the development of a fun, engaging *community* experience. In fact, 4 markets added music and/or cooking demonstrations. The FMAC and Dansdill nurtured this change by supplying the market managers and vendors with resources such as contact information for nearby vendors, a variety of entertainment options, and a support network that fostered ideas.

The biggest impact on the community from the development of the FMAC was the improved perception of Northeast Iowa's farmers markets through the facilitated branding exercises.

For example, as Dansdill worked with FMAC members to identify colors, images and themes for their brand, they better understood what the existing perceptions might be and the power they had as vendors, managers or partners to influence those perceptions. As their ideas were realized in the actual creation of a new brand, the FMAC members themselves became advocates for stronger, more professional messaging which successfully resonated with the public.

ii. *Goal: Expand the Northeast Iowa Farmers Market System*

Objective 2: Brand and Market Northeast Iowa's Farmers' Markets

a. *Progress Made:* The creation of a brand for Northeast Iowa's Farmers' Markets was developed through a facilitated discussion. Dansdill drafted three different branding concepts - Artistic, Rustic, and Color Explosion - and presented them to the FMAC. Each concept included a mock up of a billboard, poster and logo that fit into each branding concept. The branding concept was created to attract the desired demographic identified by the FMAC. The demographic identified was "New parents in the Millennial Generation", this demographic was identified because they are having children (80% of the births in the US are from Millennials) and are looking to provide healthy quality food to their children. Millennials have also shown a willingness to pay extra for local products from local producers because of their desire to trust where their food is coming from.

After a facilitated discussion, the FMAC decided to modify the three examples to create a fourth and final theme was created by pulling different components from all three of the drafted

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marketing themes for a concept entitled “Authentic Connections”. This concept utilized a color pallet with soft hues of a green to constitute health and denote nature, red to evoke emotion and encourage appetite, yellow to grab attention and increase cheerfulness, and an off-white to associate with safety and cleanliness. These color pallets were used in tandem with a light-colored pine wood frame to represent the earth, wholesomeness, and honesty.

Dansdill facilitated discussions between FMAC and a professional photographer regarding how photography could be used to brand and market Northeast Iowa’s farmers market system. Based on the design concept, the FMAC selected the following four themes for the photoshoots.

Type of Photograph	Message	Content
Farmers Markets	That the market is a fun, colorful place, full of life, with healthy and diverse products, serves as a community hub, diverse population	Happy vendors and market attendees, sunny clear skies, bright clothes, full market of attendees, lots of produce, capture the unique items found at market
Farmers Market Vendors	Hard-working people, with a passion for their produce or products, stewardship for the land, appreciation for the time and effort taken to produce the products sold at markets	Tells the story of the farmer by providing proof the farmer/baker/crafter produce the item the sell at the market, happy vendors with clean clothes in their natural element
Prepared Food	Farmers Market ingredients make recipes shine, it’s easier than you think to cook with local ingredients, recipes that highlight local unique ingredients, encourage appetite, display honesty and wholesomeness	Colorful food, prepared well, showcase the local ingredients used to produce the dish
Seasonal Produce	Highlight what is in season, educate consumers of what they can purchase locally at the market and what uncommon produced are called, bright colors	In great shape, at peak season for full color, the produce is the center piece of the photoshoot, “white” space to use for marketing,

Using the design concept and professional photos, Dansdill designed and created **individual posters for each of the 24 farmers’ markets** and had them professionally printed on a canvas. The posters were also used digitally on the NortheastIowaFarmersMarkets.org website and other forms of social media (Facebook, twitter, Instagram, YouTube, etc.). These posters will be allowed travel and displayed around the community being located in banks, city halls, economic development offices, libraries, and other public/private locations that will be available for the public to view.

Dansdill designed **2 billboards** that utilized the same branding and marketing theme. The billboards were displayed north of Decorah, Iowa and south of Oelwein, Iowa. Each site was selected to target specific demographics. The site north of Decorah was displayed for two months and targeted to visitors entering Iowa from Minnesota. The site to the south of Oelwein was displayed for nine months and is still in use. It was intended to capture the attention of people entering the region from larger communities in Iowa (Des Moines & Cedar Rapids).

Dansdill also wrote and directed a “jingle” that was used in a **radio advertisement** that was aired for 2 weeks in the summer of 2016 as follows.

*“Do you live in or near (talks quickly to make list of towns impressive) Chester, Cresco, Decorah, Edgewood, Elgin, Elkader, Fayette, Garnavillo, Guttenberg, Harpers Ferry, Independence, Lansing, Lime Springs, Marquette, McGregor, Monona, Nashua, New Hampton, Oelwein, Protivin, Riceville, Strawberry Point, Volga City, Waukon, or West Union....(big breath) Then you have a great opportunity to visit your local farmers market. Offering local products at great prices farmers markets carry healthy home grown produce straight from your next store neighbor. To look for your local farmers’ market go to (with local music playing in the background).
northeastiowafarmersmarkets.org (Jingle)”*

The same text from the radio advertisement was also utilized in a **television advertisement** to build a consistent marketing campaign message. The television advertisement was aired on KWWL (one of the largest news and television stations in Eastern Iowa – reaching 635,000 households in Northeast Iowa) during the summer of 2016.

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Radio and television marketing was paired with **print advertisements** in local newspapers (Decorah, Oelwein, Fayette, Waverly, Independence, and Waukon) and magazines (Inspired and Our Iowa).

Themed personal accounts (I Eat, I Shop, I Sell) were created utilizing the same marketing theme and were showcased on the NortheastIowaFarmersMarkets.org website and **social media sites** (Facebook, Twitter, etc.)

The final marketing was a component for **wayfinding signage** used to direct traffic to the farmers' markets by using swooper banners for days when the farmers' markets were opened to get the attention of potential drop-in market attendees when the market was "OPEN". Dansdill was able to find exceptional pricing on the wayfinding signage and was able to purchase twice as many banners for the markets as originally proposed doubling the impact for the markets.

Impact on Community: Professional branding and marketing was a huge deal to Northeast Iowa's Farmers Markets. None of these markets had the resources to develop professional signage nor did they realize the importance in drawing/engaging customers. The professional marketing materials made it easy for communities to promote their markets and for community members to find and enjoy their markets. Before the project, the extent of the most markets advertising consisted of a small yard sign to notify potential market attendees where the farmers market was located. In general no other forms of advertising were used. No farmers market in Northeast Iowa had utilized billboards or TV ads before for marketing their farmers' markets. The mass media related to these efforts increased the profile of farmers' markets in communities across the region and instilled a sense of quality in Northeast Iowa farmers' markets as significant enough to warrant mass media.

Farmers markets and vendors, themselves, used the photos on their social media sites, including Winneshiek Farmers Market (1,195 likes), Independence Farmers Market (1,198 likes), Driftless Area Wetland Centre (873 likes). The likes demonstrated the increased community profile and support for the market. Farmers Market vendors used photographs to direct market their business and promote their market products. Many used them on their Facebook pages which included Northeast Iowa Farmers Markets (100 likes), Garden Oasis (989 likes), Mad Women Pottery (196 likes), Top of the Hollow Farm (211 likes), Windy Rock Shrimp (207 likes) and BBQ4U (898 likes*used photos from the farmers' market photoshoot in Independence).

ii. Goal: Expand the Northeast Iowa Farmers Market System

Objective 3: Organize and Coordinate Current Farmers' Markets as a Regional Collective

Progress Made: To better understand, organize and coordinate current farmers' markets as a regional collective, Dansdill first needed to understand how the system was currently working. He compiled farmers market dates and times into ArcView (computer software) and then created a GIS layer and a map that was used to better understand and analyze individual farmers' markets characteristics as a dynamic regional system.

The mapping exercise revealed that neighboring farmers' markets were not collaborating or coordinating with each other. In fact, even adjacent markets overlapped their days and times. This information was distributed to individual markets and communities and the FMAC. The FMAC, as representatives to many of Northeast Iowa's farmers' markets, came to understand that the overlaps reduced the number of vendors at each market, reduced that capacity for customers, and decreased overall sales. Although awareness was raised and the group and the individual markets and communities recognized the conflict, local politics and a high market manager turnover rate (56% from 2014-2017) exacerbated the problem and prevented resolution of the issue within the project period. However, the data was crucial for development of new farmers' markets in the region, encouraging farmers markets development near Ridgeway and New Albin.

The map and information was also distributed to vendors interested in attending more markets in the region. To avoid problems, Dansdill informed FMAC and individual vendors that in Iowa vendors need to pay a licensing fee for each county in which they sell at a farmers' market. The map created through the project helped the vendors easily understand which farmers market were in the same county so they could maximize their licenses.

During this project, the following methods were also used to organize and coordinate current farmers' markets as a regional collective.

An on-line 'CSA of the Week' marketing event was held during the late winter months to encourage community members to sign up for CSA's, learn what a CSA is, and why a CSA is important to the farmer. Information was shared regarding different CSA models, including one that is currently being implemented by Patchwork Green at the Winneshiek Farmers Market. Patchwork Green allows their CSA members to purchase vouchers, which they use to purchase produce from the Patchwork Green table at the farmers' market. The model eliminates CSA member complaints of getting too much in a CSA box or getting produce they don't like. It also encourages CSA members to attend the market with hopes of purchasing more from the same or different vendors at

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the market. This presentation was particularly well received and resulted in one Northeast Iowa farm adding a CSA option with distribution at a farmers' market

During FMAC meetings, Market Managers were educated on how to accept Farmers Market Nutrition Program benefits (Women, Infants and Children, and Senior Coupons) at their respective farmers market and how to get their vendors approved before the season began. At the start of the project only 30% of the farmers' markets in Northeast Iowa accepted Farmers Market Nutrition Program benefits and at the end of 2016, 46% of the farmers' markets accepted these benefits indicating increase knowledge, capacity and organization.

The Winneshiek Farmers Market had two different voucher/token programs (Food Pantry Coupons and SNAP) that were implemented during this project. Information about these programs was shared at FMAC meetings, the Annual Urban Ag Event in Ames, at a Farmer Market Workshop in Mason City, and at the Local Food & Farmers Market Summit. These efforts helped FMAC expand the capacity of markets throughout the region to have similar programs.

Dansdill helped find speakers, organize and promote a one-day Local Food & Farmers Market Summit on February 9th, 2017 in Calmar, IA in partnership with Northeast Iowa Community College, the Depot Outlet, and the Northeast Iowa Tourism Association. The event had 19 speakers from the region that presented on topics covering three different subject tracks that were targeted towards 1) vendors 2) market managers and 3) economic development professionals. NICC kitchen staff served local food (for the first time ever) for the event and purchased dairy, meat, and vegetables from local vendors for the 64 event attendees. Breakout sessions included the following:

- Value and Scale in the local Foods Marketplace
- Market and Farm Photography; Lessons Learned
- FSMA and GroupGAP Program and Certification Information
- Farmers Market Vending 101
- Beyond the Market, Where Can I Sell?
- How to Utilize the Community Food System Program
- Healthy & Safety for Farmers Markets in Iowa
- Farm Opportunity Panel with NRCS, Farm Bureau, Farm Service Agency, Practical Farmers of Iowa, SILT, and ISU Extension
- The Power of Local Food in the Local Economy
- Developing and Building Partners and Programs
- Making the Most of your Farmers Market

The FMAC provided much input on the content for the Summit and felt it was successful in expanding the capacity, partnerships, and professionalism for markets throughout the region.

Impact on Community: The methods to **Organize and Coordinate Current Farmers' Markets as a Regional Collective** positively impacted the project communities by helping to increase understanding of best management practices, fostering opportunities for shared learning and collaboration, and increasing awareness about the "collective" presence and implementation of markets. However, the Local Food & Farmers Market Summit, had the greatest community impact of any single strategy. It impacted and influenced community leaders, local food growers, market managers, economic development directors and city employees.

In a post-conference survey documenting the impact on the community, participants reported (28 of 64 returned the survey): an 8.6 out of 10 overall rating (1 low - 10 high rating system) for the event and shared these comments:

"Good time to hear about specifics on family/food businesses"

"I appreciated the panel and hearing about the place-based resources – great idea"

"Steve McCargar used down to earth language, not foreign words that didn't relate to my market"

"Health Inspection information was great and very valuable"

"Would come again great sessions"

"I was able to network on opportunities for marketing my produce."

"Found ways to improve my marketing not only for farmers' markets by my other markets as well"

The second biggest impact to the community was related to the increased access to healthy food in the region, which is very limited. Eleven of the farmers' markets in the region are located in communities without an operating grocery store. Therefore, the increase in Farmers Market Nutrition Program benefits had a positive impact on community members and communities that rely on these programs. Also, the implementation and promotion of low-income

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programs combined with the collective implementation of consistent messaging also helped to change the perception of the market as a ‘wealthy man’s grocery store’ to a community hub.

iv. Goal: Expand the Northeast Iowa Farmers Market System

Objective 4: Expand Potential for Northeast Iowa Farmers’ Markets to Succeed

Progress Made: Dansdill attended every farmers’ market in Northeast Iowa and completed an assessment for each market. The assessments documented availability of parking, location of the market, signage, number and type (vegetable/craft/baker) of vendors, potential community partners, and nearby attractions. Assessment results were distributed to FMAC and market managers. Although the high turnover rate (58%) of market managers made it difficult to effect change, and/or accomplish tasks that would address the needs discovered in the assessment, some larger markets utilized the assessment to implement changes that expanded their potential for success.

The Winneshiek Farmers Market used the assessment to identify new community partners, search out new vendors, and highlight community attractions. Some Allamakee County markets used the assessment to begin a conversation about market improvements. Other smaller markets throughout the region used the assessment to consider relocation to new sites or identify opportunities for shared use of facilities, identify/recruit new vendors, and reach out to new community partners. Some also changed their signage and/or wayfinding.

The assessments and follow-up discussions with FMAC and market vendors also identified a need for more training and technical resources for Northeast Iowa market managers. FMAC felt the need was largely associated to three factors – 1. The high turnover rate of market managers 2. The high number of part-time city clerks that are tasked with managing the market in the small towns 3. The lack of easily accessible information for new market managers.

The existing farmers market managers suggested a Farmers Market Toolkit be developed. This suggestion resulted in the development of a new Farmers Market Toolkit Project that will help develop tools for market managers across the State of Iowa and continue to expand the potential for Northeast Iowa Farmers Markets to succeed beyond the life of this project.

Through the survey of markets, project personnel and FMAC participants found that Northeast Iowa’s Farmers’ Market have been great starting places for new and upcoming entrepreneurs in rural Iowa. Market managers reported on businesses that had successfully gotten their start at markets. Several entrepreneurs approached Dansdill for advice about selling at the markets during the project period.

Impact on Community: The research, dialog and resulting individual market actions that occurred during the project changed the function and perceptions of the market. Community economic development leaders began to better understand the dynamics of farmers’ markets as business incubators as well as community hubs. Their increased understanding of how farmers’ markets can be used to jettison new local food businesses helps their communities with economic development in the near and long term. Expanded participation in the market by new vendors impacted markets and communities by helping them expand the profile and offerings and meet the needs of a more diverse group of community members. Those entrepreneurs that use the market to establish their customer base and hone their skills will be more successful when they leave the market and establish their businesses in the community, increasing business options and community development within their communities. The project also found that working to create a viable, long-term, successful farmers market was more effective when an educated market manager had easy access to resources he or she could use to assist the market vendors. Because of the project, the FMAC partners began to better understand and articulate that providing collective training and resources is a good investment that helps their rural communities revitalize their downtown main street and develop new businesses. This new attitude has the potential to foster community partnership and change the community dynamic between the cities, the farmers’ markets and other business owners.

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: 1 - Jessica Rilling from Jessica Rilling Photography was hired as the professional photographer for this project.
 - ii. Number of jobs retained: 1 - Dansdill was retained as the Regional Farmers Market Coordinator at Northeast Iowa RC&D
 - iii. Number of indirect jobs created: 12 - 1 farmers market hired a part-time employee to be the market manager and a number of vendors had an increase in sales, these vendors did not become full-time vendors but with an increase in revenue it can be seen as part-time employment.

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- iv. Number of markets expanded: 4 - Dansdill reported an expansion in the size and capacity of the Winneshiek Farmers Market, Guttenberg Farmers Market, Independence Farmers Market, and Harpers Ferry Farmers Market.
- v. Number of new markets established: 2 - Dansdill assisted with the establishment of 2 new farmers market one in New Albin and Ridgeway by providing assistance on developing a new market and marketing efforts.
- vi. Market sales increased by \$26,755 and 8.5%. Most farmers' markets in Northeast Iowa (25 of the 26) do not keep track of vendor sales at the market. Keeping track of vendor's sales was encouraged by the Winneshiek Farmers Market manager (the only manager keeping track of sales) to inform the City how important of a resource a farmers' market is.
- vii. Number of farmers/producers that have benefited from the project: 209
Percent Increase: With an increase of vendors at 4 farmers' markets, Dansdill presented to Northcentral and Eastern Iowa Farmers Market vendors on how to create a regional Farmers Market Advisory Council. Farmers Market vendors in Northeast Iowa increased by 11 (177 to 188) and Dansdill presented to an additional 21 farmers market vendors at other regional workshops and events. This increased the number of producers who benefited from the project to 209 and targeted 177 for an increase in 18%.

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, in Decorah the Winneshiek Farmers Market was the first farmers market in Northeast Iowa and one of 6 in the State of Iowa to implement a SNAP Scrip system to bring access to underserved and low/moderate income households. Winneshiek Farmers Market was able to partner with the Healthiest State Initiative to implement a Double Up Food Bucks Program. Both programs were made possible by Dansdill at Northeast Iowa RC&D from conversations with vendors and the market manager at the Winneshiek Farmers Market. Implementing this system, the Winneshiek Farmers Market was able to draw in residents from Postville, IA, which is 32% Hispanic or Latino, 26.4% SNAP eligible, and a median household income \$18,393 below the national average.

4. Discuss your community partnerships.
- i. Who are your community partners?

Clayton County Economic Development Director, New Horizon Chamber Director, Winneshiek County Tourism Director, Allamakee County Economic Development Director & Tourism, Howard County Economic and Tourism Director, Winnehsiek Farmers Market Manager, Driftless Area Wetland Centre, Guttenberg Chamber of Commerce, Decorah Chamber of Commerce, Buchanan County ISU Extension, Community leaders in the city of Independence, Harpers Ferry Farmers Market Manager, Patchwork Green Farm, Gordons Garden, Tir na n'Og, Empty Nest Winery, ISU Extension and Outreach, Iowa Food Hub, Oneota Food Community Food Coop, USDA Farm Service Agency Clayton County, USDA NRCS Winneshiek County, Iowa Farm Bureau, Practical Farmers of Iowa, Iowa Department of Inspections and Appeals, Iowa Valley RC&D, Northeast Iowa Community College, Iowa's Healthiest State Initiative, Winneshiek Farmers Market Association, The Depot Outlet, Northeast Iowa Tourism Association, Driftless Area Scenic Byway, River Bluffs Scenic Byway, Healthy Harvest of North Iowa, New Albin Improvement League, City of Ridgeway, Windy Rock Shrimp, Mad Women Pottery, Garden Oasis LLC, Top of the Hollow Farm, Low Oaks Farm, Prairie's Edge, Community leaders in the City of Decorah, and Winneshiek County Development Association.

- ii. How have they contributed to the overall results of the FMPP project?

The community partners assisted with Expanding Northeast Iowa's Farmers Market System by participating on the Farmers Market Advisory Council, development and participation in the Local Food & Farmers Market Summit, implementation of a scrip system, development of new farmers' markets, participation in photoshoots, implementation of a Double Up Food Bucks program and by providing information for the development of themed marketing materials.

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

The FMAC will continue to meet and work together on collaboration projects throughout the region. Many interdisciplinary relationships and partnerships were created at the Local Food & Farmers Market Summit, which was

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the original intent of the development of the summit by the FMAC. Marketing materials created during this project were made available to farmers' market vendors and managers to utilize to advertise and promote their market.

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

Northeast Iowa RC&D did not hire a contractor to complete the work.

6. Have you publicized any results yet?*
- i. If yes, how did you publicize the results?

Dansdill presented on the work he has completed for this project at the Local Food & Farmers Market Summit in Calmar, IA, the North Central Farmers Market Workshop in Mason City, IA, and the Agricultural Urbanism Annual Event in Ames, IA. He is also working with the FMAC to create a more visually appealing 'Summary of FMAC Findings & Projects' for partners that will include the work detailed in this report. This final performance report will be shared on the Northeast Iowa Farmers Markets and Northeast Iowa RC&D web sites.

- ii. To whom did you publicize the results?

Each of the events was targeted to individuals who are involved in the local food system in Iowa. The Northeast Iowa Farmers Market and Northeast Iowa RC&D web sites are viewed by the general public, including citizens interested in local foods and farmers markets.

- iii. How many stakeholders (i.e. people, entities) did you reach?

The Local Food & Farmers Market Summit had 64 attendees (18 attendees in Dansdill's specific presentation concerning this project). The North Central Farmers Market Workshop had 23 attendees and the Agricultural Urbanism Annual Event had 82 attendees (25 attendees in his audience). The Northeast Iowa Farmers Markets and Northeast Iowa RC&D page receive 9,300 views annually.

*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?

Feedback was collected informally through person to person meetings with members of the FMAC, the community, market managers, farmers market vendors, and attendees at the markets. An evaluation was completed by attendees of the Local Food & Farmers Market Summit.

- ii. What feedback was relayed (specific comments)?

"Wow it is so neat to see our commercials on TV. Last night just before the news your farmers market ad came on. It looked great, and is very attention catching." Darla Kelchen Clayton County Economic Development Executive Director and member of the FMAC

"Hoping things are going well for you, Dansdill. I had some banners made from the photos you had taken last fall, and they'll be displayed in my tent during art festivals and the Guttenberg Farmers Market this year!! Linda Sue Sulzdorf Mad Women Pottery

"Thank you for bringing these folks together (FAMC) I've been a volunteer as the Harpers Ferry Farmers Market Manager for over 10 years with no resources." Connie Benedict Harpers Ferry Farmers Market Manager and FMAC member

"Providing a support network for farmers market managers for Northeast Iowa was a great idea!" Steve McCargar Winneshiek County Farmers Market Manager and FMAC member

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“I thought Chris Blanchard was a great keynote speaker because he was able to reach the entire audience, the farmers, the market managers and those who shop at the farmers’ market! Thanks for bringing him to Northeast Iowa!” Spiff Slifka Howard County Business and Tourism Director and FMAC member

“Thanks for providing me the opportunity for professional photographs, this has been something we have wanted to do for long time and never were able to make it happen” TD Houlb Garden Oasis Farm

“Thank you for brining Jessica Rilling out to our operation, her pictures are going to be used to create a display banner for the farmers market” Jennifer Reis Windy Rock Shrimp

9. Lessons Learned:

i. Summarize any lessons learned. They should draw on 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).

Positive: The overall response to formation of a FMAC was positive. Although facilitation of such a diverse group was challenging, the overall discussion was robust and dynamic. We learned that bringing producers, market managers, economic development leaders and other partners together changed the dialog and increased opportunities for success within individual communities and markets and overall success in the region. We learned that development of collective branding and marketing that was locally led by the partners was more focused and effective with the public. We learned that a regional farmers market branding effort was well received by every segment of the local food system including producers, produce vendors, market managers, value added market vendors, community leaders and economic development directors. Although collectively deciding the content and purpose of specific photo shoots was challenging, it resulted in widespread and dynamic use of the photographs. We learned that different types of photographs were needed by different partners, including different content, layout and color use. We also learned that given time and facilitated discussion, FMAC members began to identify how to use specific photographs. For example, when we first talked about photographing prepared foods, the vendors were skeptical of use but then those that run CSAs explained that many customers don’t know what they can use certain vegetables for, or how to prepare or store those vegetables. The prepared foods photo shoots ended up being very popular because they helped vendors and market managers better encourage and recruit customers. Although we developed a regional marketing campaign that touched on the themes they wanted, at first the individual markets were skeptical about use of the marketing materials and brand. To overcome that, Dansdill and the FMAC Board needed to help the individual markets implement regional branding without losing the unique characteristic of their market. We learned that farmers market managers had little to no past assistance in preparing, operating, and marketing their market so they were eager to get the assistance and eager to learn. We learned that they really appreciated having a single point of contact to ask a variety of questions and direct them to resources associated with a variety of topics including health inspection, networking opportunities, and potential grant opportunities for projects and programs. Building a support network for market managers was not only rewarding, it helped us better understand and communicate how farmers markets can be incredible community assets. Implementing the scrip system at the Winneshiek Farmers Market after they had tried and failed to for 7 years was a huge learning opportunity for us and an accomplishment for that market that wouldn’t have been achieved without the Regional Farmers Market Coordinator reaching out to other markets across the country to provide the FMAC and the Winneshiek Farmers Market Board with the necessary information. This taught us that although there are opportunities to learn from other markets in the region, state and nation, our local rural markets don’t have the resources or know how for how to do that. We learned that great ideas could come from individual markets and be shared regionally through facilitated discussion at FMAC meetings. For example, the idea for recruiting local sponsorship was shared by a farmers’ market manager during a FMAC meeting. It was the first and only sponsorship effort in the region but discussion was so robust that we anticipate many market managers will implement sponsorship opportunities in the coming year. Members of the FMAC expressed a need for additional information about the economic impact of farmers’ markets in their community. The market managers expressed the difficulty in collecting sales data from vendors but want to express the economic value the farmers market brings to the community. If data could be collected to calculate an estimate based on market attendance, number of vendors, and a commodity price to estimate the overall economic value the farmers market brings this data could be provided to elected officials, city managers, and community leaders to gain support for the market.

No info collected about the economic impact of farmers market and \$ for products

Farmers Market Promotion Program (FMPP) Final Performance Report

Negative: The time spent working with the farmers markets that overlap day and time was difficult because of the high turnover rate of farmers' market managers, city council, and city managers made it difficult to fully implement the regionally farmers market schedule within the time frame of this grant project. This goal is achievable with time and believe it was crucial to start the conversation in these communities. A select few communities kept changing their market time, even though this was not recommended in the assessment, and this can be corrected over time with more information and education on managing farmers' markets.

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

The goal of developing and implementing a regional farmers' market schedule could not be fully achieved due to the high turnover rate of market managers, city council and city managers within the time frame of the grant.

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 budget for the FMPP program is designed to be more well-defined than many other grant programs. We learned that it was important to continuously re-evaluate the budget to ensure that all tasks could be accomplished within the confines of the original budget. It is natural that a multi-year project expense will differ from the proposed budget. We learned to anticipate changes in our budget and to work closely with FMPP staff and our own project coordinators to responsibly and openly address financial changes or challenges. Other reporting requirements were easy to comply with and the grants managers were always available and prompt to answer questions.

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.

Northeast Iowa RC&D has already continued to build upon the work that was completed from this project and will be working over the next 3 years to build the capacity of farmers' market managers across the state of Iowa by developing a statewide Farmers Market Manager Toolkit. Through this project, Northeast Iowa RC&D and Iowa Valley RC&D will be developing, promoting, and facilitating 6 farmers market workshops that will be broadcast online as well as held across the State of Iowa. These workshops will comprise archived training videos, market manager handouts that will address the frequently asked questions of market managers, and a farmers' market manager manual. This project was identified as a need through correspondence with market managers and vendors throughout the region during the completion of the Expanding Northeast Iowa's Farmers Market System project. Dansdill has worked with Eastern Iowa and Northcentral Iowa to assist in the development of regional Farmers Market Advisory Councils, both regions have already formed and met in 2017. Northeast Iowa RC&D will continue to be a resource for hosting regional FMAC meetings, providing education and outreach to local producers and market managers throughout Northeast Iowa, and developing future projects to assist the needs of farmers' markets. Dansdill has worked with Eastern Iowa and Northcentral Iowa to assist in the development of regional Farmers Market Advisory Councils, both regions are already meeting,

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?

After the completion of the Farmers Market Manager Toolkit in 2019, Northeast Iowa will look into implementing the following activities for farmers' market managers and vendors:

- Conduct an analysis focused on the economic impact farmers' markets have on rural communities.
- Assist with the development of vendor and farmers market specific marketing materials that will build upon the developed regional branding and marketing campaign.

NORTHEAST IOWA RC&D

FARMERS MARKET PROMOTION PROGRAM 2014 FINAL REPORT



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ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The Regional Farmers Market Coordinator worked with producers, market managers, County Tourism Directors, and County Economic Development Directors to develop Farmers Market Advisory Council (FMAC). With this group the coordinator branded and marketed Northeast Iowa's farmers markets as a region, organized and coordinated current farmers market times, vendor and activities as a regional collective, expanded the potential for Northeast Iowa Farmers Markets, improved participation by all stakeholders in the farmers market system.

Northeast Iowa Resource Conservation & Development (RC&D) would like to thank the time, energy and effort of the FMAC during the duration of this grant period. Funds through the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) made this project possible.

The project area included: 7 counties in Northeast Iowa that include Allamakee, Buchanan, Chickasaw, Clayton, Fayette, Howard, and Winneshiek.



PROJECT SUMMARY



Northeast Iowa RC&D is 501(c)3 non-profit serving a seven-county region of Northeast Iowa since 1987, including Allamakee, Buchanan, Clayton, Chickasaw, Fayette, Howard, and Winneshiek in Iowa. Northeast Iowa RC&D is devoted to increasing economic development by promoting and protecting natural resources, and strengthening the region's economy through place-based projects that foster small local business creation and expansion. These goals have made local food expansion a natural priority for Northeast Iowa RC&D, and has been working on a local foods projects, including the 2014 Farmers Market Promotion Program Expanding Northeast Iowa Farmers Market System.

Northeast Iowa's local foods and farmers market experience has brought to light the challenges that face local foods stakeholders, the potential these markets could provide to the region, and the need for a Regional Farmers Market Manager. The RC&D's work introduced the Northeast Iowa Local Foods Expansion Plan to the producers and the market managers who consequently expressed interest in participating in its implementation.

The "Expanding Northeast Iowa Farmers Market System" project has allowed Northeast Iowa RC&D to take the region's farmers market system to the next level by pulling together many of the concepts employed by the previous projects and infusing them with energy, knowledge and experience to connect farmers markets as an essential part of the rural communities.



This project implemented a model for a regional rural farmers market system that brings together producers and farmers market managers from multiple small rural farmers markets as a collective to help maximize the potential for individual and regional local foods distribution. Work

for this project took place over a two and half year period from October 2014 to March 2017. Work was completed by Northeast Iowa Resource Conservation & Development (RC&D) through the Regional Farmers Market Coordinator.



Northeast Iowa RC&D worked with 209 producers and 25 farmers markets in the seven-county wide project area, both of which have faced many different challenges. The RC&D found that a new breed of farmers market vendors are using markets and local food production as a way to make a living versus selling as a hobby. Producers, especially the beginning farmers, are seeking opportunities to learn about growing, producing, processing, and selling food.

PROJECT SUMMARY



It has been found that 60-70% of visitors to farmers markets visit adjacent businesses fostering economic development in rural communities, but there are several challenges to Northeast Iowa's markets that must be overcome to capitalize on the potential economic benefits. These included:

- Lack of consistent management
- Limited products
- Decreasing number of vendors
- Poor visibility and signage
- Overlapping marketing schedules
- Limited events
- Limited marketing
- Lack of support from community members and officials
- No regional coordination
- Lack of educational opportunities in the region

This project created a vibrant regional farmers market system that brings together producers, farmers market managers, county tourism directors, and county economic development directors as a collective that helped maximize the potential for individual and regional local foods distribution. Northeast Iowa RC&D employed the Regional Farmers Market Manager who accomplished the following objectives:



Created and facilitated a Farmers Market Advisory Council (FMAC), which ensured all stakeholders were represented in gathering input, dispersed information through the FMAC, and obtained measurable results at the beginning and end of the project.

Branded and marketed Northeast Iowa's Farmers Markets, by standardizing a brand for Northeast Iowa's Farmers Markets and implemented a cohesive and powerful marketing campaign.



Organized and coordinated current farmers markets as a Regional Collective, by strengthening the market as a collective after analyzing the pieces of the system.

Expanded potential for Northeast Iowa Farmers Markets to succeed by improving participation in all stakeholders in the farmers market system and transform the farmers market culture.



FARMERS MARKET ADVISORY COUNCIL

A regional 7-county Farmers Market Advisory Council (FMAC) was developed that is comprised of vendors, market managers, economic development directors, and county tourism directors.

ACTIVITY 1A HOSTED & FACILITATED FMAC MEETINGS

MARKET/EVENT PLANNING

Farmers’ Markets across the region are organized, run, and managed differently. Getting members of the FMAC together to speak about news/events at each meeting allowed for other market managers, vendors, economic development directors, and county tourism directors to learn, ask questions, and share contact information. This communication provided the avenue for markets to develop events, share entertainment, participate in cross-promotion, enhance economic development, and implement a variety of strategies to improve and grow the farmers markets in Northeast Iowa.

MARKETING AND PRODUCT DISTRIBUTION

The FMAC had an integral part in the design and development of marketing materials and the implementation of regional branding campaign. The FMAC worked to develop a brand a regional brand entitled “building authentic connections”. This brand allowed each market to showcase their unique quality but use collective marketing to their advantage (i.e. same look and feel by using personal and compelling imagery). All FMAC members decided to enforce rules that would provide trust to the regional branding that was developed.

FARMERS MARKET ADVISORY
COUNCIL MEMBERS

FARMERS MARKET MANAGERS

Steve McCargar - Winneshiek Farmers Market Manager
Alicia Mullarkey - Driftless Area Wetland Centre Market Manager
Emily Sadewasse - Guttenberg Farmers Market Manager
Sarah Kielly - Independence Farmers Market Manager
Elaine Govern - Riceville Farmers Market Manager
*Joe Olsen - Independence Farmers Market Manager
Connie Benedict - Harpers Ferry Farmers Market Manager
*Katrina Moyna - Driftless Area Wetland Centre
*Not currently market managers



FARMERS MARKET VENDORS

Erik Sessions - Patchwork Green - Winneshiek Farmers Market Vendor
Paul Young - Tir na n'Og - Driftless Area Wetland Centre Vendor
Gordon Murray-John - Independence & Oelwein Farmers Market Vendor
Dave & Pam Kruger - Empty Nest Winneshiek & Harpers Ferry Farmers Market Vendor

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Darla Kelchen - Economic Development Director Clayton County
Jason Speltz - New Horizon - Chamber
Lora Friest - Northeast Iowa RC&D Executive Director
Charlene Shelbee- Winneshiek County Tourism Director
Val Reinke - Allamakee County Economic Development & Tourism
Spiff Slifka - Howard County Economic and Tourism Director

CONFERENCE PLANNING



Through facilitated meetings the FMAC identified topics, workshops, and the overall goal of hosting a conference. The FMAC stressed the importance of not only learning skills but by building connections between all parties in the local food system a The FMAC put an emphasis on finding local (Northeast Iowa) speakers to ensure the development of a conference that was focused on enhancing markets in the region.



BRANDING AND MARKETING

The Farmers Market Advisory Council through facilitated meetings developed a brand that conveyed the spirit and quality of the farmers' markets of Northeast Iowa.

ACTIVITY 2A FACILITATED BRANDING SESSIONS

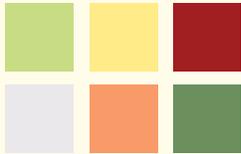


The Regional Farmers Market Coordinator facilitated a branding discussion to determine the look and feel of a brand. It was agreed upon that all farmers markets should convey trust, a personal connection to the farmer, and be real. “Authentic connections” was selected as the theme.

During the FMAC branding session members of the FMAC were presented with three different concepts (Rustic, Artistic, and Color Explosion) as options to convey the brand “Authentic Connections”. This discussion led to the presentation of pieces were taken from all three to develop a brand that had very colorful photos (Artistic), logo (Rustic), and wood frame (Color Explosion). A final draft was designed with feedback from the FMAC during the branding session.

The FMAC used pieces from all 3 concepts to create the final stylistic choice used for the final brand.

ACTIVITY 2B
THEMED MARKETING



Color Pallet

Utilizes soft hues of a green to constitute health and denote nature, red to evoke emotion and encourage appetite, yellow to grab attention and increase cheerfulness, and an off-white to associate with safety and cleanliness. These colors were utilized in a design with a light-colored pine wood frame to represent earth, wholesomeness, and honesty.

Farmers Market

Font

Eat. Shop. Sell. LOCAL

Slogan



Design

ACTIVITY 2C
DEVELOP MARKETING AND OUTREACH MATERIALS

PRESS RELEASES AND NEWSPAPER ARTICLES



24 press releases and news paper articles were written and released to local and regional newspapers to assist with promoting the farmers markets. This was accomplished by highlighting vendors, eating seasonally, events, and supporting local.

Press Releases have been sent/printed in:

- The Decorah Journal (newspaper) x 4
- Oelwein Daily Register (newspaper) x 2
- Fayette Cty. Shopper (newspaper) x 2
- Waverly Newspaper x 1
- Independence Bulletin Journal (newspaper) x 4
- Waukon Standard (newspaper) x 4
- Clayton County Register (newspaper) x 3

RADIO ADS / INTERVIEWS

Radio Ad

Do you live in or near Chester, Cresco, Decorah, Edgewood, Elgin, Elkader, Fayette, Garnavillo, Guttenberg, Harpers Ferry, Independence, Lansing, Lime Springs, Marquette, McGregor, Monona, Nashua, New Hampton, Oelwein, Protivin, Riceville, Strawberry Point, Volga City, Waukon, or West Union.... Then you have a great opportunity to visit your local farmers market. Offering local products at great prices farmers markets carry healthy home grown produce straight from your next store neighbor. To look for your local farmers market go to (with local music playing in the background). northeastiowafarmersmarkets.org (Jingle)

The Regional Farmers Market Coordinator promoted the regional farmers markets by highlighting vendors, eating seasonally, events, and supporting local. This was accomplished through eight radio interviews with Arleen on the “Arleen Show” on KNEI which blankets a huge portion of Northeast Iowa, Southwest Wisconsin, Southeast Minnesota.

A radio ad (to left) was aired on Wennes Communications Stations in the summer of 2016 for two weeks. The advertisement featured all the markets in Northeast Iowa, local music in the background (farmers market vendor) and a jingle to get potential vendors and farmers market attendees to the Northeast Iowa Farmers Markets.org website.

BILLBOARDS



Three Tourism and Economic Development Directors, on the FMAC, proved invaluable in developing the billboards. The FMAC suggested the billboard be bright, colorful, large letters, and easy to read. The FMAC was presented with 3 designs and ended up picking items from each 3 to include in the final draft. Billboard locations were selected by picking busy Highways and locations that caught visitors as they entered NE Iowa. Two final 12’x24’ billboards were selected with locations selected North of Decorah along Highway 52 facing North and South of Oelwein along Highway 150 facing South. Each billboard was completed and up in view for 8 weeks in July and August of 2017. Each site selected were located on high traffic areas for Northeast Iowa with the Oelwein location seeing 21,145 weekly views and the Decorah site seeing an average of 16,815 weekly views respectively.

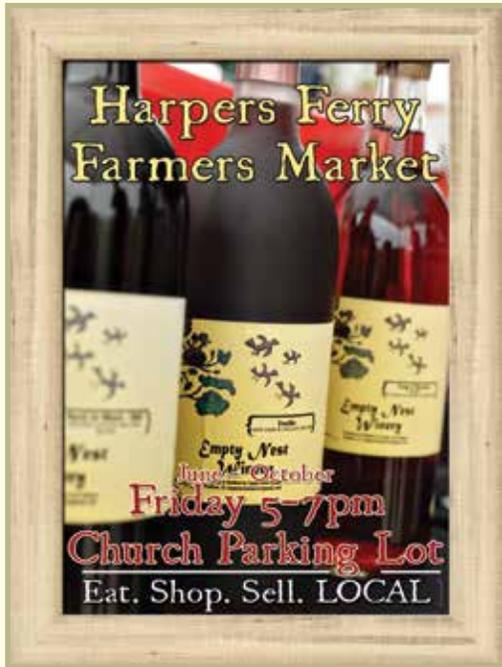
TELEVISION COMMERCIAL

A member of the FMAC had a developed partnership with a local TV station. The Regional Farmers Market Coordinator was able to work with her to develop TV advertisement to run during the 2017 farmers market season. The two 30 sec ads were designed and developed to highlight a variety of local products that could be found at the farmers market. The ads aired on KWWL - TV Channel 7 and ME TV between September 9, 2017 and October 1, 2017. These dates were selected to help drive sales later in the farmers market season as suggested by members of the FMAC. KWWL is a large local news broadcaster for Northeast Iowa and reaches 635,000 households. One TV ad was aired 5 times a day between September 18 -24 and reached a minimum of 92,000. The other ad was also aired 3 times a day between September 24 -October 1 and reached a minimum of 74,000 people. The TV ad was seen by a minimum of over 4.7 mil. for the duration of time the ad was run on KWWL.

BANNERS

FMAC members had a strong need for more way finding signage that could draw attention to their respective farmers market. A universal canvas banner was selected because of it's durability, high visibility with height and bright colors. The markets that received the 24 banners decided to only place the banners out in sight when the farmers market was taking place. This was important to the market managers to not only ensure the quality of banner is maintained but also to create a standard that would inform potential attendees when a market is open. Farmers Markets that received one of the 24 banners met certain criteria for need of wayfinding signage (ex. along a Highway) and participation in the Farmers Market Advisory Council.

POSTERS

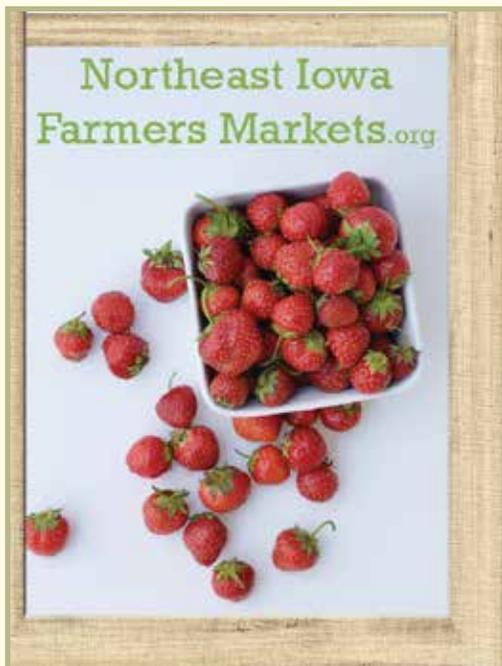


A custom poster was created for every farmers market in Northeast Iowa that highlighted the date, time, location, and products sold at that market. Each poster was highlighted on the Northeast Iowa Farmers' Markets web-page through a page devoted to that specific market with information on where it was, who vends and manages the market, and how to get there. Each poster was developed to convey and build upon the branding of farmers' markets in Northeast Iowa. Each poster had the pine wood frame, a large color photo taken by Jessica Rilling, a consistent color pallet, and the slogan "Eat. Shop. Sell. LOCAL".

Every poster was printed and framed on canvas and given to farmers markets to use to promote their markets.

All posters can be seen in Appendix A at the end of this report.

PRINT ADVERTISEMENTS



Print advertisements were designed and distributed through a series of newspapers and magazines with statewide distribution. Each ad used a consistent color pallet, the slogan "Eat. Shop. Sell. LOCAL", and highlighted when and where the farmers markets take place.

Advertisements have been printed in:

- The Decorah Journal (newspaper)
- Oelwein Daily Register (newspaper)
- Fayette Cty. Shopper (newspaper)
- Waverly Newspaper
- Independence Bulletin Journal (newspaper)
- Waukon Standard (newspaper)
- Inspired (magazine)
- Our Iowa (magazine)

THEMED PERSONAL ACCOUNTS



An “I Sell” marketing series was created that focused on farmers market vendors that asked a series of questions such as:

- Why do you sell at the farmers’ markets?
- What made you want to sell at the farmers’ market?
- What do you love most about the farmers’ market?
- What is your favorite dish/recipe to create from farmers’ market ingredients?

Each material was designed consistently with other farmers market marketing materials and were displayed on the Northeast Iowa Farmers Markets website.

An “I Shop” marketing series was created that focused on farmers market attendees that asked a series of questions such as:

- Why do you shop at the farmers’ markets?
- What fruit or vegetable season do you look forward to the most?
 - What do you love most about the farmers’ market?
- What is your favorite dish/recipe to create from farmers’ market ingredients?

Each material was designed consistently with other farmers market marketing materials and were displayed on the Northeast Iowa Farmers Markets website.



An “I Eat” marketing series was created that focused solely on the dishes and recipes that are created from food purchased at the farmers market. The series was comprised of recipes from market vendors and attendees with a recipe, color photos, and the consistent branding followed for Northeast Iowa Farmers Markets.



Recipes

- Farmers Market Soup with Pesto Pasta
 - Roasted Garlic Squash Soup
 - Homemade Chili
 - Crispy layered Potatoes
- Local Cheeseburger with Heirloom Tomatoes
 - Potato Salad
 - Quinoa Salsa Salad

ACTIVITY 2D WAY-FINDING SIGNAGE



Northeast Iowa RC&D purchased 24 banners to assist in way finding efforts for Northeast Iowa Farmers Markets. The banners purchased for this project were identified by the Farmers Market Advisory Council. The banners were delivered to farmers markets across Northeast Iowa and were encouraged to follow FMAC suggested actions for usage of banners only when the farmers market is open. This was suggested to allow potential market attendees to see the banners as “OPEN” signage.

ACTIVITY 2F IMPLEMENTED SOCIAL MEDIA CAMPAIGN



A social media campaign was developed and implemented to assist with brand development, advertise events, promote local vendors, eating seasonally, and creating awareness and promotion for CSA's found in Northeast Iowa.

Below is a list of all social media avenues used during this Farmers Market Promotion Project:

Website: northeastiowafarmersmarkets.org

Facebook: Northeast-Iowa-Farmers-Markets

Pinterest: Northeast Iowa

YouTube: Northeast Iowa Farmers Markets

Google+: Northeast Iowa Farmers Markets

Twitter: NEIA Farmers Market @IAFarmer_Market

Instagram: [northeast_iowa](https://www.instagram.com/northeast_iowa)

Google Maps: northeastiowafarmersmarkets.org

ACTIVITY 2E DISTRIBUTE MARKETING MATERIALS



Northeast Iowa Resource Conservation & Development (RC&D) has organized numerous projects for a variety of agencies and community groups. This has allowed the Regional Farmers Market Coordinator to be in regular contact with FMAC members throughout the project, which he has used to distribute materials out to community leaders, farmers market vendors, market managers, and city/county officials.

- Chester
- Cresco
- Decorah
- Driftless Area Wetland Centre
- Edgewood
- Elgin
- Elkader
- Fayette
- Fredericksburg
- Garnavillo
- Guttenberg
- Harpers Ferry
- Independence
- Lansing
- Lime Springs
- McGregor
- Monona
- Nashua
- New Hampton
- Oelwein
- Protivin
- Riceville
- Strawberry Point
- Volga
- Waukon

PHOTOSHOOTS



Samples of each photoshoot can be seen in Appendix B.

A professional photographer (Jessica Rilling) was hired and conducted 15 photoshoots of local producers and ingredients that are being used to promote and build the brand of the Northeast Iowa Farmers Markets. Photographs were shared with the producers to be used to promote their businesses and have been used to create banners and posters, press releases, and to build an Online presence on Facebook, Twitter, or their websites.

Photoshoots Completed (816 total photographs)

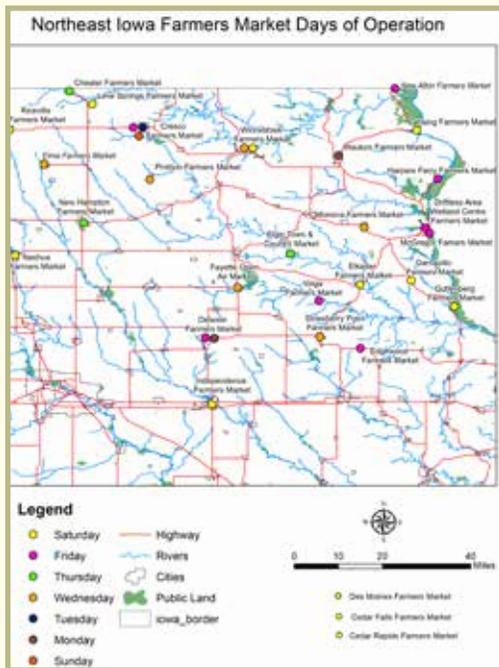
- Independence Farmers Market (70)
- Winneshiek Farmers Market (124)
- Driftless Area Wetland Centre Farmers Market (38)
 - Spring Seasonal Ingredient (89)
 - Summer Seasonal Ingredient (90)
 - Fall Seasonal Ingredient (308)
 - Whisk and Spoon (30)
 - Garden Oasis Farm (67)
 - Mad Women Pottery (20)
 - Top of the Hollow (28)
 - July Prepared Food Event (62)
 - Windy Rock Shrimp (30)
 - Camping Prepared Food (411)
 - Prepared Breakfast (50)
 - Prepared Soup (50)



REGIONAL COLLECTIVE

Organized and coordinated current farmers markets as a regional collective.

ACTIVITY 3A REGIONAL FARMERS MARKET SCHEDULE



A map was created and distributed to market managers and community leaders to highlight the day and location of all the farmers' markets across Northeast Iowa. This resource assisted farmers market vendors in discovering new markets to attend.

This map has also been a valuable resource for the creation of new markets in the region. The City of Ridgeway utilized this map to create a farmers market that will not overlap neighboring markets and allow vendors to attend multiple farmers markets.

It was used to analyze market overlap, the Regional Farmers Market Coordinator discovered overlapping market time for neighboring markets. The FMAC attempted to resolve these issues. High market manager turnover and local politics made it difficult to find a solution. That might prevent the market from attracting maximum number of customers or that might force vendors to choose which market to attend. Additionally, vendors need a permit for each county in which they sell making it more challenging for vendors.

ACTIVITY 3B
MAXIMIZE MARKET SALES THROUGH CSA'S & VOUCHERS

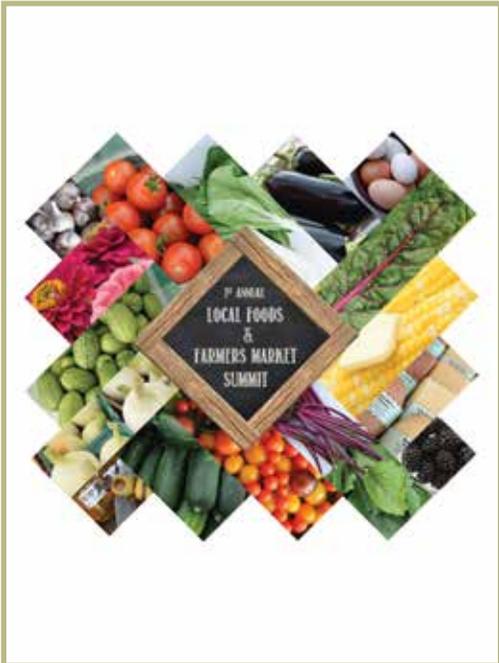


A “CSA of the Week” marketing event was highlighted in February and March to assist farms in Northeast Iowa promote their CSA programs. Marketing materials not only included information about the farm but information on what Community Supported Agriculture is and how it benefits the farm.

The Regional Farmers Market Coordinator worked with the Winneshiek Farmers Market to accept Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and Double Up Food Buck benefits through a scrip system. This was the first scrip system implemented in Northeast and one of six across the state.

The RC&D provided training and assistance for farmers market managers to accept Farmers Market Nutrition Program (FMNP) benefits (WIC and Senior Coupons). At the beginning of the project in 2014 only 30% of the farmers market accepted FMNP. In 2016, 46% of the farmers markets are approved to accept FMNP benefits.

ACTIVITY 3C
FARMERS MARKET CONFERENCE



The Regional Farmers Market Coordinator organized and coordinated the first Local Food & Farmers Market Summit on February 9th, 2017. The summit was held at Northeast Iowa Community College (NICC) in Calmar, IA and had 64 attendees from across Iowa and 19 different speakers. The 19 speakers covered three different tracts that were targeted towards vendors, market managers, and economic development personnel.

The event keynote speaker featured Chris Blanchard, who spoke about the “Value and Scale in the Local Foods Marketplace” and lead a workshop on “Scaling up to fill the Plate”.

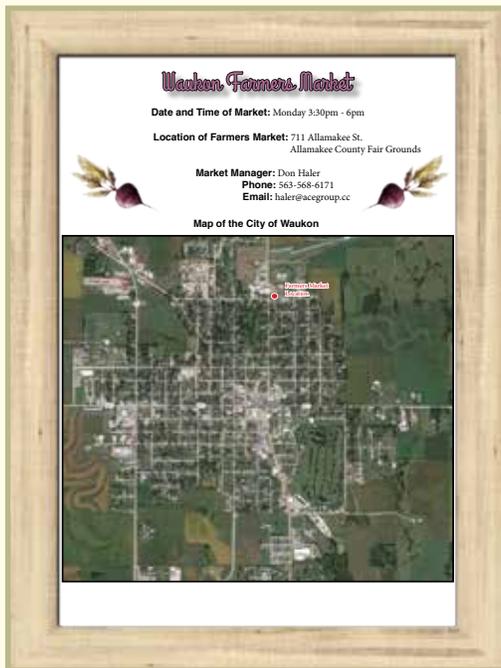
“I thought Chris was a great keynote speaker because he was able to reach the entire audience, the farmers, the market managers and those who shop at the farmers market!” - Spiff



EXPAND FARMERS MARKET POTENTIAL

Organized and coordinated current farmers markets as a regional collective.

ACTIVITY 4A FARMERS MARKET ASSESSMENTS



The Regional Farmers Market Coordinator attended every farmers market in Northeast Iowa in May or June and completed an assessment specific to each market. The FMAC assessed the availability of parking, location of market in the community, signage, vendor(s), potential partners, and neighboring attractions. Each assessment included a summary of findings, a regional farmers market days of operation map, and suggested action steps to improve the farmers market.

Each assessment was sent to community leaders to begin a discussion on ways to maximize the farmers' markets in the region.

A sample of the Farmers Market Assessment be seen in Appendix C.

ACTIVITY 4B INCREASE MARKET ATTENDANCE



After the completion of the project the Regional Farmers Market Coordinator interviewed and surveyed the market managers who participated in the project. Market managers from the Winneshiek Farmers Market, Independence Farmers Market, and Guttenberg Farmers Market saw an increase in the number of vendors while other markets saw their vendor numbers stay the same during the grant project. All participating vendors and market managers (none kept exact totals for the number of visitors) say in 2015 we had more attendance than in 2016. The lower numbers in 2016 was attributed to the amount of rain received on evenings and weekends, this claim is backed up by rain records. Summer rain totals in Northeast Iowa for the months of May-Aug in 2014-2016 are as follows;

2014 - **22.78** inches of rain
2015 - **21.5** inches of rain
2016 - **46.69** inches of rain

SNAP SCRIP SYSTEM



The Farmers Market Advisory Council members expressed interest in accepting SNAP benefits at the farmers market. Iowa implements a vendor only method for accepting SNAP at the Farmers Markets and the Scrip/Token system is the other commonly used method to accept SNAP benefits at farmers markets. The Regional Farmers Market Coordinator conducted research and outreach to existing agencies implementing this system. From this outreach the coordinator got in touch with a group of people looking to implement a Double Up Food Bucks program in the State of Iowa.

The Regional Farmers Market Coordinator implemented the scrip system in 2016 at the Winneshiek Farmers Market in Decorah, IA. The program allowed the Winneshiek Farmers Market vendors to accept SNAP dollars due to issues and problems they had from trying for years to implement the state issued program. The Winneshiek Farmers Market brought in an additional \$764 in Double up and SNAP benefits in 2016.



CONCLUSION

What happened during this grant

FARMERS MARKET PROMOTION
PROJECT SUMMARY



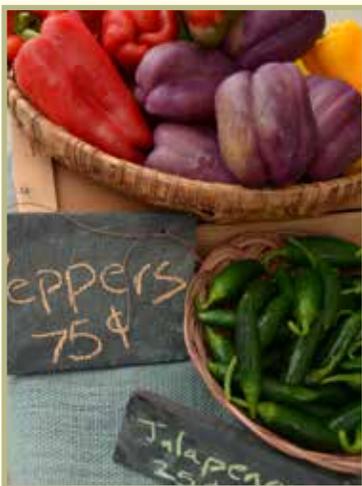
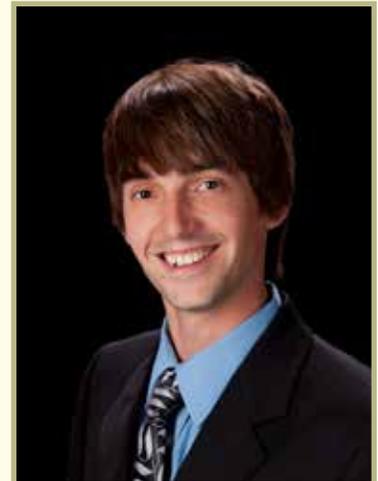
Outcomes: 1) Farmers market managers had assistance in preparing, operating, and advertising their market. 2) Being the point of contact for market managers for answering questions, finding out health inspection questions, passing along potential grant opportunities for projects and programs, and building a support network for these market managers. 3) Showing that farmers markets can be incredible community assists. 4) Implementation of the scirp system at the Winneshiek Farmers Market. 5) Ideas for local sponsorship were shared by a farmers’ market manager during a FMAC meeting, which was well received as this was the first market to receive a sponsorship. 6) Education for market managers to track sales data. 7) Establishing a communication network for market managers to contact one another. 8) Sharing of resources between markets. 9) Point of contact for producers/vendors to answer questions regarding health and safety, marketing, locating other farmers markets, and help identify potential funding sources.

LESSONS LEARNED OVER THE COURSE OF THE PROJECT



Challenges: 1) Working with the farmers markets that currently have an overlap with their date and time was difficult. As certain communities didn't want to change times and felt like why should they be the one that changes and not the other. Every community would like to have their farmers market on a Friday or Saturday but Northeast Iowa doesn't have the population or number of vendors to allow everyone to have a market over the weekend. 2) Another challenge was working with a few farmers' markets that keep changing times during the day (this was not recommended in the assessment) and is making it hard to develop marketing materials and develop routines in market attendees at this market. 3) The turnover rate of the farmers' market managers (56%) made it difficult to develop relationships and trust to help grow and develop farmers' markets.

Regional Farmers Market Coordinator take aways: I would like to see more farmers' markets across the country be successful in small rural communities and believe this could be achieved through training, education, and support for market managers to build a strong foundation for these rural farmers' markets. Followed up with strong local and regional marketing campaign and encouragement in entrepreneurship in small rural communities and to use farmers' markets as the low overhead way to enter the market place for aspiring entrepreneurs. Rural communities are struggling and I believe the only way we can help them strive is to foster the growth of small businesses. Growth of small communities in the past was achieved through the recruitment of large businesses hoping to employ 100's of people and this is just not happening in many small rural communities, leaving growth up to entrepreneurs.

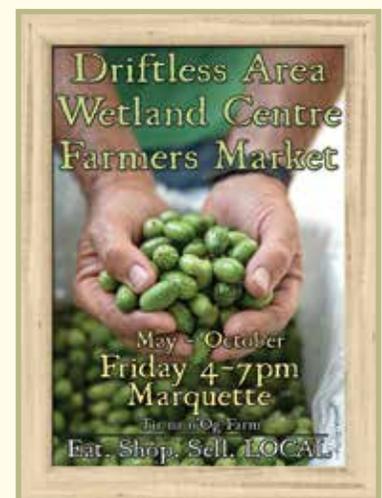
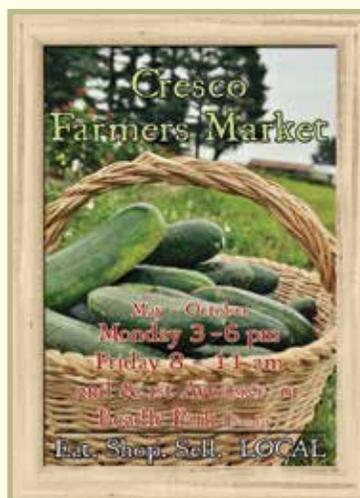
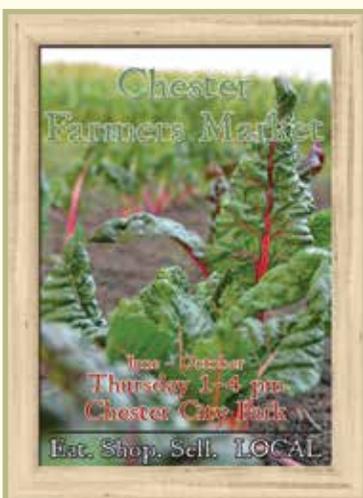




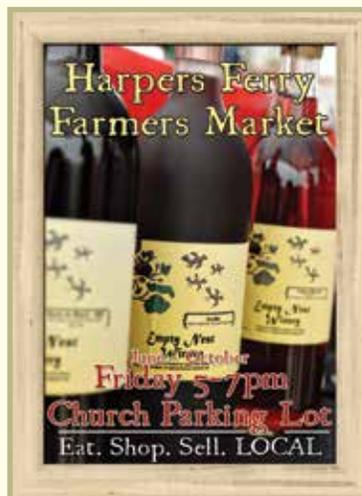
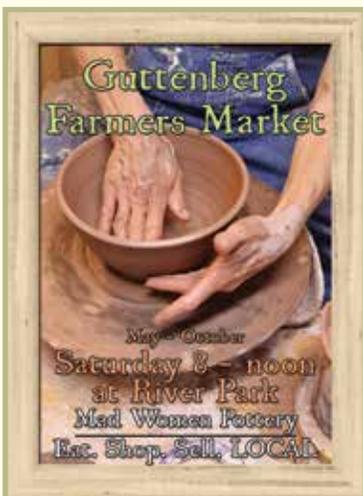
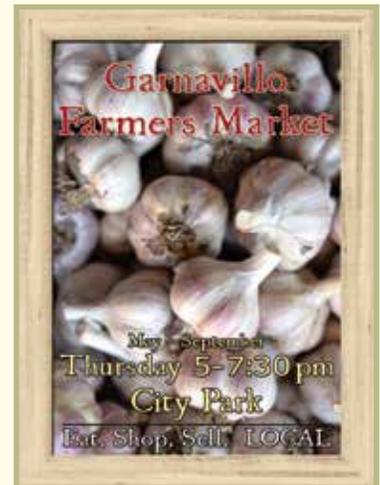
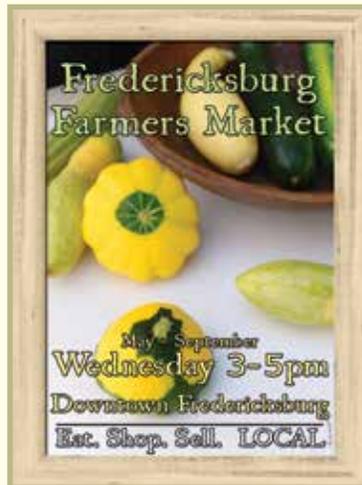
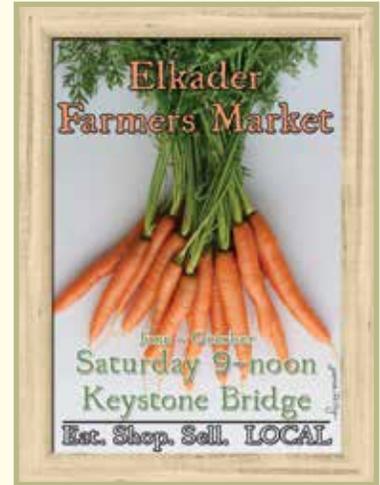
APPENDIX A

Print Marketing Materials

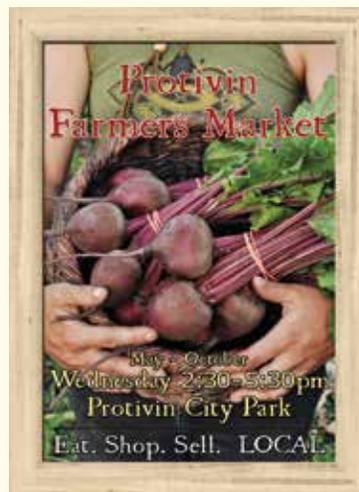
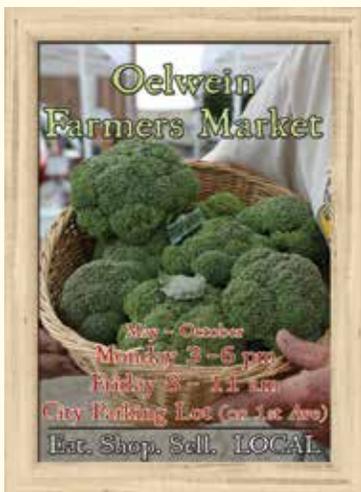
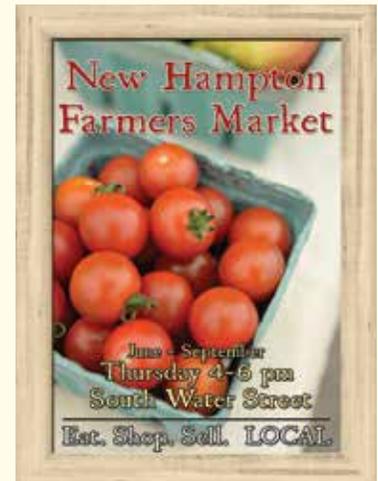
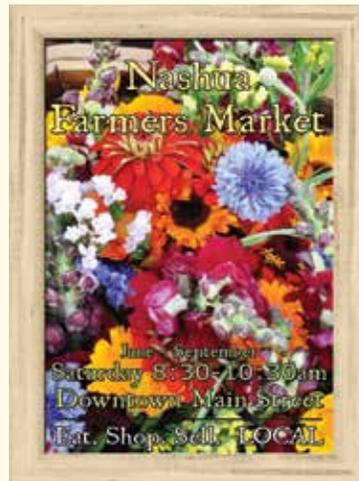
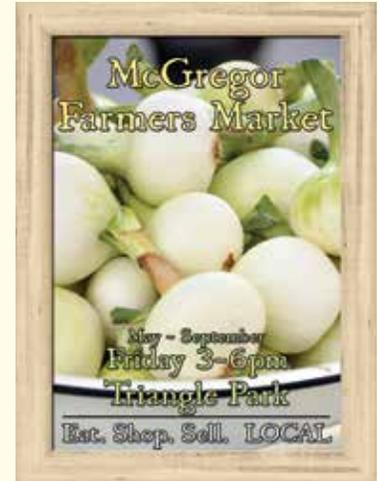
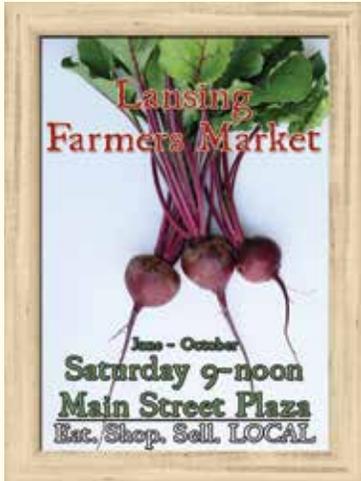
POSTERS FOR FARMERS MARKETS



FARMERS MARKET POSTERS



FARMERS MARKET POSTERS

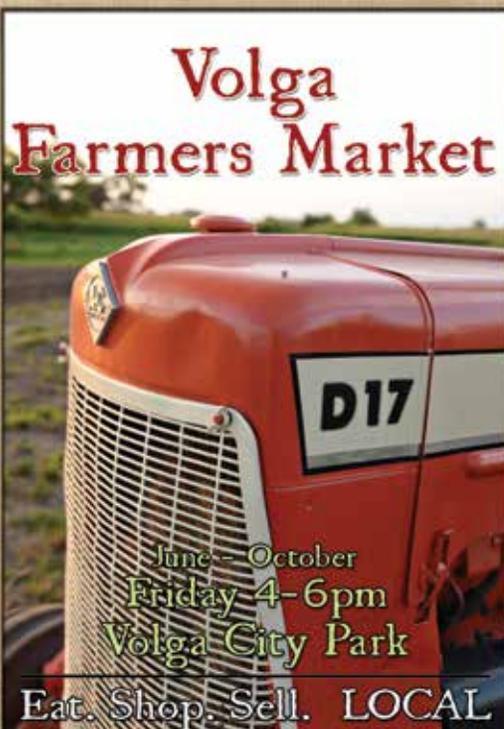




**Strawberry
Point
Farmers Market**

May - September
Wednesday 4-6 pm
Inger Park

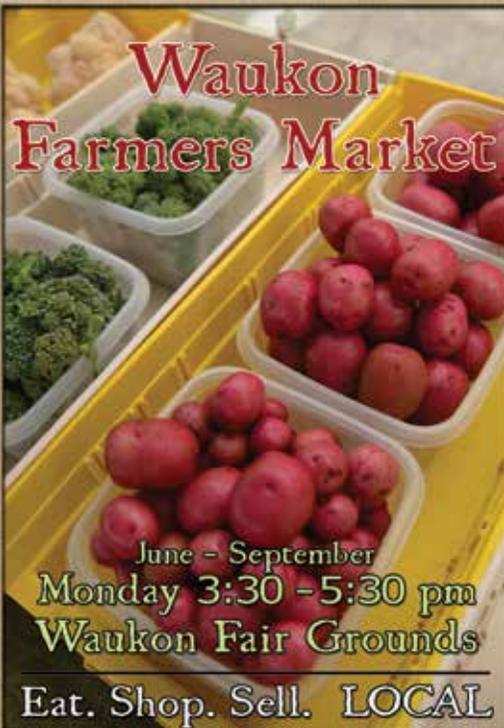
Eat. Shop. Sell. LOCAL



**Volga
Farmers Market**

June - October
Friday 4-6pm
Volga City Park

Eat. Shop. Sell. LOCAL



**Waukon
Farmers Market**

June - September
Monday 3:30 - 5:30 pm
Waukon Fair Grounds

Eat. Shop. Sell. LOCAL



**Winneshiek
Farmers Market**

May - October
Wednesday 3 - 5 pm
Saturday 8 - 11 am
Across from the Post Office

Eat. Shop. Sell. LOCAL

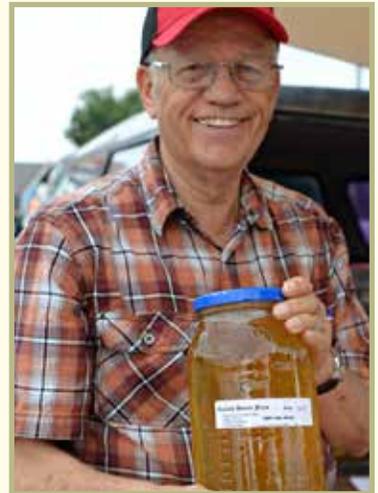


APPENDIX B

Sample of photographs produced during this project

SAMPLE OF
PHOTOGRAPHS

INDEPENDENCE FARMERS MARKET PHOTOSHOOT



WINNESHIEK FARMERS MARKET PHOTOSHOOT



DRIFTLESS AREA WETLAND CENTRE PHOTOSHOOT



SPRING SEASONAL PHOTOSHOOT



SUMMER SEASONAL PHOTOSHOOT



FALL SEASONAL PHOTOSHOOT



WHISK & SPOON



GARDEN FARM OASIS PHOTOSHOOT



MAD WOMEN POTTERY PHOTOSHOOT



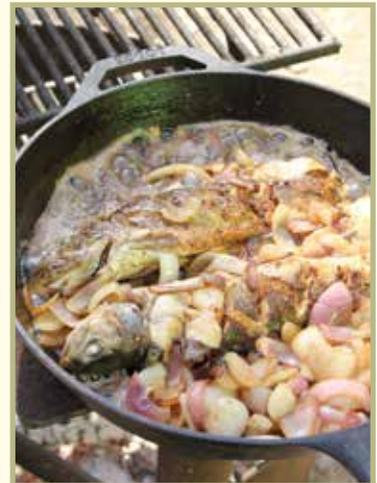
TOP OF THE HOLLOW PHOTOSHOOT



WINDY ROCK SHRIMP PHOTOSHOOT



CAMPING PHOTOSHOOT



JULY PREPARED FOOD EVENT PHOTOSHOOT



PREPARED BREAKFAST PHOTOSHOOT



PREPARED SOUP PHOTOSHOOT





APPENDIX C

Farmers Market Assessments

SAMPLE OF ASSESSMENT

LOCATION

EXISTING CONDITIONS

VENDORS AND COMMUNITY

DEMOGRAPHICS AND SUMMARY

Chester Farmers Market



Date and Time of Market: Thrusday 1pm - 4pm

Location of Farmers Market: Chester City Park

Market Manager: Paw Wendel

Phone: 563-565-2535



Map of the City of Chester



Chester Farmers Market

Current Conditions of the Chester Farmers Market



Parking: Is limited to street parking and has room for 5 cars. Market attendees could park further away from the park in the residential neighborhood and walk to the market.

Location: The market is located right off HWY 63 near the gas station in the center of town.

Shelter: The location of the farmers market is under a pavilion in the Chester City Park, which is newly constructed with a metal roof, concrete slab, and picnic tables.

Current Signage: The only signage the Chester Farmers Market has is a small yard sign with the name of the market, date, time and the brand logo of Howard County Farmers Market.



Nearby Attractions: Chester currently has Laddy's Bar and Grill, a German Heritage Furniture, R&S Fuel Gas Station and Convenience Store operating in the downtown district of the City of Chester. Chester is also located near great natural resources that include the Upper Iowa River and Hayden Prairie.



Chester Farmers Market

Possible Community Partners

Events

Old Settlers Days in the month of June

Grocery Stores

None

Restaurants

Laddy's Bar and Grill

Chester Farmers Market Vendors 2015

<u>Vendor Type</u>	<u>Number</u>
Produce.....	0
Prepared Foods / ready-to-eat.....	0
Bakery.....	0
Crafts.....	0
Seafood.....	0
Coffee.....	0
Nursery / Cut Flowers.....	0
Cheese.....	0
Meat.....	0
Nuts.....	0
Eggs.....	0
Poultry.....	0
Honey.....	0
Pet Food/Toys.....	0

*Number of vendors during my visit to the market on June 18, 2015

Chester Farmers Market

Community Information

Population

2010 census

As of the census of 2010, there were 127 people, 64 households, and 36 families residing in the city. The population density was 94.8 inhabitants per square mile (36.6/km²). There were 77 housing units at an average density of 57.5 per square mile (22.2/km²). The racial makeup of the city was 99.2% White and 0.8% Native American. Hispanic or Latino of any race were 0.8% of the population.

There were 64 households of which 17.2% had children under the age of 18 living with them, 42.2% were married couples living together, 4.7% had a female householder with no husband present, 9.4% had a male householder with no wife present, and 43.8% were non-families. 40.6% of all households were made up of individuals and 21.8% had someone living alone who was 65 years of age or older. The average household size was 1.98 and the average family size was 2.58.

The median age in the city was 48.8 years. 17.3% of residents were under the age of 18; 5.5% were between the ages of 18 and 24; 20.5% were from 25 to 44; 27.5% were from 45 to 64; and 29.1% were 65 years of age or older. The gender makeup of the city was 55.1% male and 44.9% female.

Summary

No one was currently present at the Chester Farmers Market on June 18th. For this market to grow they need to only advertise when a vendor will be present as this will deter market attendees from coming back if they arrive and no one is vending. With no grocery store in the City of Chester this is the only possibility for people in the community to purchase food within the community.

Cresco Farmers Market

Date and Time of Market: Tuesday 2pm - 5:30pm & Friday 2pm - 5:30pm
Sunday 9:30am - 1pm

Location of Farmers Market: SW 1st Ave & 2nd St W Beadle Park (Sunday)

Market Manager: Sandra Parks (Tuesday & Friday) Jessica Skoda (Sunday)

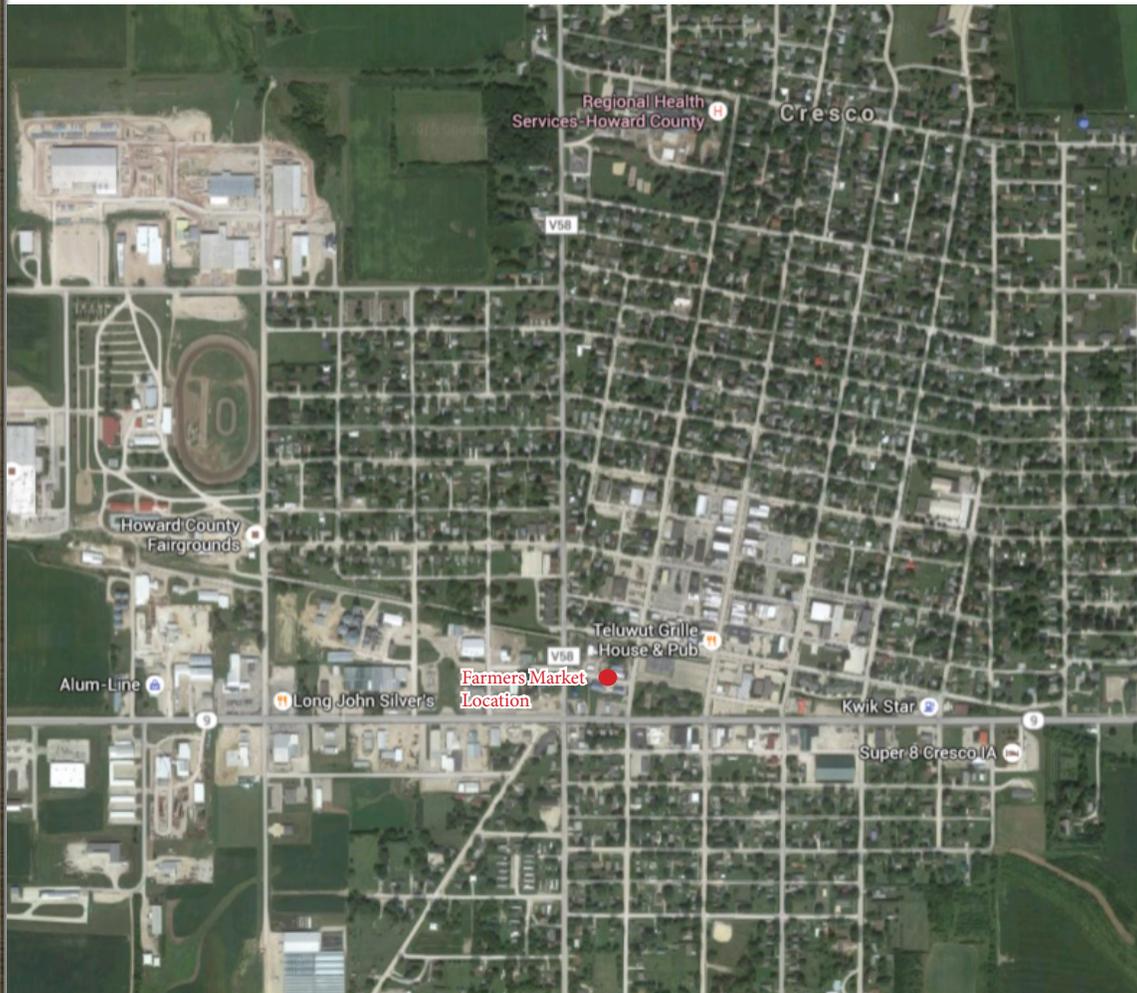
Phone: 563-547-2231

563-203-0643

Email: parks.richard@mchsi.com



Map of the City of Cresco



Cresco Farmers Market

Current Conditions of the Cresco Farmers Market



Parking: Tuesday and Friday it's limited to street parking and has room for 13 cars with 2 additional handicap parking spots and Sunday Parking is 70+.

Location: The market is located on 1st ave (Tues & Fri) and Beadle Park (Sunday) right along HWY 9.

Shelter: Tuesday/Friday the location is in the Grub lot with no amenities. The Sunday market has no shelter for vendors but a pavilion for attendees.

Current Signage: The only signage the Chester Farmers Market has is a small yard sign with the name of the market, date, time and the brand logo of Howard County Farmers Market.



Photo Credit Jessica Rilling

Nearby Attractions: Include the Prairie Farmer Bike Trail, Cresco Fitness Center, Cresco Theater and Opera House, and the home of Norman Borlaug.

Cresco is also located near great natural resources that include the area around the Howard County Conservation Office, Cardinal Marsh, and Wildlife Management Areas along the Turkey River.



Cresco Farmers Market

Possible Community Partners

Events

Norman Borlaug Harvest Fest in September, Cruise to Cresco in September, Fly-In Breakfast in August.

Grocery Stores

Fareway Grocery Store

Restaurants

Teluwut Grille House & Pub, Dough & Joe, Mables Pizza, Subway, Panda Gardens, South Side Bar and Grill, Sue-Z-Q's Family Dining, Pizza Hut, and Long John Silver/A&W

Cresco Farmers Market Vendors 2015

Vendor Type	Number
Produce.....	3
Prepared Foods / ready-to-eat.....	0
Bakery.....	2
Crafts.....	1
Seafood.....	0
Coffee.....	0
Nursery / Cut Flowers.....	0
Cheese.....	0
Meat.....	0
Nuts.....	0
Eggs.....	0
Poultry.....	0
Honey.....	0
Pet Food/Toys.....	0

*Number of vendors during my visit to the market on June 9th, 2015

Cresco Farmers Market

Community Information

Population

2010 census

As of the census of 2010, there were 3,868 people, 1,660 households, and 962 families residing in the city. The population density was 1,154.6 inhabitants per square mile (445.8/km²). There were 1,821 housing units at an average density of 543.6 per square mile (209.9/km²). The racial makeup of the city was 97.3% White, 0.4% African American, 0.1% Native American, 0.4% Asian, 0.7% from other races, and 1.1% from two or more races. Hispanic or Latino of any race were 1.6% of the population.

There were 1,660 households of which 29.3% had children under the age of 18 living with them, 45.1% were married couples living together, 9.0% had a female householder with no husband present, 3.9% had a male householder with no wife present, and 42.0% were non-families. 36.3% of all households were made up of individuals and 17.3% had someone living alone who was 65 years of age or older. The average household size was 2.26 and the average family size was 2.95.

The median age in the city was 39.8 years. 25.1% of residents were under the age of 18; 7.4% were between the ages of 18 and 24; 24.2% were from 25 to 44; 23.6% were from 45 to 64; and 19.7% were 65 years of age or older. The gender makeup of the city was 48.0% male and 52.0% female.

Summary

Cresco has the more farmers markets per week than any other community in Northeast Iowa. Both are currently operating as separate entities which can cause confusion for market attendees and an effort to create more unity between them should be attempted and a single location should be found and utilized to address potential confusion. Little signage was seen at the farmers market and could be increased to encourage more potential market attendees to stop and shop.



NORTHEAST IOWA RC&D
Resource Conservation & Development