

**Farmers Market Promotion Program (FMPP)
Final Performance Report**

The final performance report summarizes the outcome of your FMPP award objectives. As stated in the FMPP Terms and Conditions, 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 FMPP staff to avoid delays:

FMPP Phone: 202-690-4152; Email: USDAFMPPQuestions@ams.usda.gov; Fax: 202-690-4152

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

Report Date Range: <i>(e.g. September 30, 20XX-September 29, 20XX)</i>	September 30, 2014 –September 29, 2016
Authorized Representative Name:	David Church, Commissioner
Authorized Representative Phone:	845-615-3840
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Recipient Organization Name:	County of Orange
Project Title as Stated on Grant Agreement:	Enhancing Orange County Farm Market & EBT Expansion Program
Grant Agreement Number: <i>(e.g. 14-FMPPX-XX-XXXX)</i>	14-FMPPX-NY-0127
Year Grant was Awarded:	2014
Project City/State:	Orange County, New York
Total Awarded Budget:	\$100,000

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: _____; Email: _____; Phone: _____

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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.

Goal #1: Increased awareness and attendance of county-wide farmers' markets and increased consumption of locally produced agricultural products.

Goal #2: Expansion of local markets utilizing EBT systems in low-income communities.

Goal #3: Expansion of new local market opportunities by establishing up to 2 winter farmers' market.

Goal #1 – Object/Activity 1: Contract with Market Coordinator who will coordinate promotion and advertising of all 15 county farmers' markets.

a. Progress Made: Market Coordinator hired and began work in June 2015.

b. Impact on Community: See goals and impacts below. The Market Coordinator was responsible for implementing the grant goals as described.

Goal #1 – Object/Activity 2: Research sales history from previous market season and plan advertising and promotion program for upcoming summer markets.

a. Progress Made: Sales data was not available from previous seasons. Either no records were kept, or the market managers did not feel comfortable sharing this information. Additionally, the smaller market vendors did not keep very detailed records of sales data per market. Those vendors that do keep sales data are the larger scale vegetable purveyors who operate their business in many parts of the state and often provide the "anchor store" for the market and are therefore not representative of the overall sales of the market.

In mid June 2015, the Market Coordinator met with the Director of Tourism to determine collaborative opportunities and develop a marketing plan for the season. The plan for 2015-6 is attached. The print ad campaign focused around the expansion and use of SNAP benefits at markets as well as a general "know your farmer" message highlighting the diversity of farmers found in Orange County. Ads were placed in local newspapers and Spanish language papers with regional reach and in two Yiddish papers (although it was advised that these ads should be placed in English as the message would likely be lost if translated to Yiddish and the papers' audience all speak English). Ads are attached.

b. Impact on Community: Impact of research on the community was not applicable. The impact of advertisements was also difficult to quantify since we didn't have a method of specifically tracking the advertisements, except when placing digital ads. However, we were able to track clicks on the Orange County Agritourism webpage, which was advertised on all materials presented to the public. I've attached the data, but it shows a significant increase from 2015 during the months the ads were placed (the majority of ads were placed in 2016). Additionally, advertisements for the winter markets mostly took place in 2016, and the data shows an increase in clicks in that category as well. Unfortunately, we were not able to capture this information previous to

September 2015 since the website was redesigned at that time and allowed for this data capture.

Goal #1 – Object/Activity 3: Identify stakeholders to assist with the management of a market in Port Jervis. Identify interested vendors.

- a. Progress Made: In 2015 the Port Jervis market opened, but was supported only by a part time staff position within the city offices. Through an arrangement with the Orange County Department of Health, the Market Coordinator was able to secure funding for a paid market manager (part-time, seasonal). This individual did an excellent job working with the Market Coordinator to identify and locate individuals to form steering committee. They met several times throughout the 2016 season, planned events, expanded local outreach and marketing efforts, and held a fundraiser in October of 2016. They also supported the application process for SNAP acceptance.
- b. Impact on Community: Market visitor ship tripled in 2016, the steering committee has taken on full operations of the market (with the exception of space and liability coverage provided by the city), and the market is all set to accept SNAP benefits and credit cards in 2016. The committee also has deep-rooted connections to organizations throughout Port Jervis and has embedded the market in many of their existing outreach efforts.

Goal #1 – Object/Activity 4: Promotion of all farmers' markets in Orange County through coordinated advertising and enhanced signage by Orange County Tourism.

- a. Progress Made: With design assistance from the Orange County Tourism Department, the Market Coordinator created a brand and detailed marketing campaign for the Orange County Farmers Markets. The marketing campaign was launched in 2016. And since 2015, markets have used the logo and display OC Farmers Market signs. The brand has gained recognition and the media has picked up the brand and featured it in their press without intervention from the Market Coordinator. (See included advertisements, logo and sample signs and media hits marked 'branding' attached). Digital social media efforts have also been launched: in 2016 a Facebook and instagram identity was created for the markets using the logo to further reinforce the brand.
- b. Impact on Community: Signs are kept out during the season so that even when the market is not operating, it is obvious to passers by that there is a market there. Additionally, since they are consistent across the county, when people are traveling in areas of the county outside of their hometown, they recognize the sign as representative of a farmers market. Additionally, through a social media following, the OC Farms brand is recognized and farms and farmers market can identify themselves outside of the local area as originating from Orange County. It is useful when farms sell product in the New York City and then have a retail operation that can be visited by NYC tourists when they travel upstate to this area; if they see the OC Farms logo they know it is a product they have already encountered in the city.

Goal #2 – Object/Activity 1: Work with the NY Farmers’ Market Federation to set up necessary accounts and submit SNAP applications to initiate use of EBT terminals at up to 3 markets, and to obtain training to manage the EBT redemption process.

- a. Progress Made: Monroe Museum Village and Port Jervis Farmers Market are now certified to accept SNAP benefits. Market Coordinator fully trained in managing EBT redemption process at markets and worked with Port Jervis Market manager to ensure they received the proper training and instruction.
- b. Impact on Community: This will expand the reach of the farmers markets in these areas since both communities have significant food stamps populations. By enabling SNAP recipients to use their SNAP benefits at these farmers markets, it makes the high quality and freshest food available to individuals regardless of their financial constraints. Additionally, by enabling these individuals to purchase items when they are in season, it often allows them to purchase items at a lower cost than they would find in a grocery store, therefore stretching their food dollar.

Goal #2 – Object/Activity 2: Initiate Pilot Double-Up Program for use with EBT terminals. CCE and Market Coordinator.

- a. Progress Made: Double up program was rebranded “Bonus Bucks” and was used at the Museum Village Farmers Market in 2016. NY State funds a successful buyback program (called Fresh Connect) and so it was decided that markets would continue to participate in this program rather than use only the limited Bonus Bucks. However, since Museum Village and Port Jervis were not able to obtain SNAP certification until late in the season, it was extremely useful to be able to offer the same buyback program that was offered at other markets (Bonus Bucks was modeled after Fresh Connect), even though it was too late for the market to participate in the state Fresh Connect Program in 2016.
- b. Impact on Community: SNAP recipients received more value for their SNAP purchases, since every \$5 in SNAP benefits was matched with a \$2 coupon. It also provided an attractive marketing angle for promoting the markets.

Goal #2 – Object/Activity 3: Begin Press Release campaign and paid advertising as related to SNAP acceptance at up to 3 markets.

- a. Progress Made: Tourism and the Market Coordinator collaborated on a marketing and advertising campaign that was launched in 2016. (Some advertising took place in 2015, but because of the late start of the Market Coordinator, advertisements were only placed in the fall.) However, several press releases were issued and the Market Coordinator was able to coordinate several stories about the project, including a front page story for the most widely circulated daily newspaper (the Times Herald Record). Additionally, a flyer was created that was posted on bus stops and in buses detailing which markets can be reached by public transportation. See press samples, advertisements, and marketing plan attachment. Not mentioned as a specific goal for this grant, but equally as important as advertising and press, was the Market Coordinator’s focus on training market managers and

committees in the tasks of community organizing and networking to promote the market. All the market managers received training on how to identify potential partners in their community and how to develop relationships with these partners (community organizations, faith-based communities, health and environmental focused groups, children's organizations, libraries, etc.). These relationships developed will last beyond the grant period and will help to solidify the market as a community fixture. Additionally, on a county level, the Market Coordinator made lasting connections with each of the WIC offices and the Department of Social Services so that all markets accepting WIC FMNP coupons and SNAP benefits are promoted through these channels. DSS was provided with brochures and market listings for their clients and these were mailed to each SNAP recipient in the county as their renewals occurred. (See SNAP attachments).

- b. Impact on Community: Through brand recognition and the constant awareness generating of the markets that accept SNAP and working with community organizations that are in direct contact with this population, the

Goal #2 – Object/Activity 4: Attend weekly markets at up to 3 locations to administer EBT/SNAP redemption program including data collection on EBT sales.

- a. Progress Made: Market Coordinator attending Museum Village Farmers Market to administer EBT program starting September 20th through the end of the market. The reason for the late start was due to difficulties in the certification process.
- b. Impact on Community: Individuals in the Monroe and surrounding areas were able to pay for their products using SNAP benefits. SNAP sales at the market increased exponentially each week. The winter market in Museum Village is also able to accept SNAP benefits.

Goal #3 – Object/Activity 1: Identify vendors, establish rules and regulations, obtain necessary approvals, and lead marketing efforts for a winter farmers' market at the Monroe Masons facility. CCE, Tourism and Market Coordinator (Sept. 2015 – April 2016)

- a. Progress Made: A winter market took place in the 2015-2016 season in Newburgh, but did not continue to do the sponsoring organization leaving the area and therefore the lack of space to house the market. The Monroe Masons decided in 2015 they were no longer interested in hosting a farmers' market and in 2016 the Monroe Winter market opened in December at Museum Village. It is a collaboration between the Village of Monroe and Museum Village Summer markets.
- b. Impact on Community: Vendors are able to sell their products year round. Half of the vendors selling at the Monroe summer market are present at the Museum Village Winter Market. Individuals in the Monroe area and surrounding communities are able to purchase locally produced items once per month throughout the year. SNAP benefits are accepted at this market.

Goal #3 – Object/Activity 2: Train volunteers and organization leaders in market management.

- a. Progress Made: In the early summer 2015 and in the spring 2016 all market managers were gathered for a training focusing on outreach techniques and how to locate and collaborate with potential community groups in the local areas. Additionally, this meeting enabled market managers to meet and contact information for all individuals was shared. These connections enabled individuals to develop relationships between each other so that if questions arise during the season, they could contact each other for assistance. While the Market Coordinator often provided technical assistance to the market managers, she also encouraged these relationships so that information sharing could occur without the intervention of the Market Coordinator. Additionally, it was helpful for new market managers to be able to hear expertise provided by those who have managed markets for many years.
 - b. Impact on Community: Market managers have a support system among themselves which results in exchange of information and expertise. Vendor information, management practices, and outreach and advertising tips and techniques were all provided to the market managers and a vehicle for the continued exchange of information was created, through introductions of the market managers.
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: 3 (OC Market Coordinator and market managers for Port Jervis and Newburgh – Downing Park farmers markets)
 - ii. Number of jobs retained: 3 (OC Market Coordinator continues to work on a limited basis on farm and farm market promotion, Port Jervis and Newburgh – Downing Park farmers market managers positions are funded for 2017)
 - iii. Number of indirect jobs created:
 - iv. Number of markets expanded: This is difficult to quantify, but the Monroe Winter market is an extension and collaboration between the two summer markets in Monroe. Additionally, the Monroe Museum Village market was able to accept SNAP benefits in 2016 for the last month of the season (with over \$300 in sales during this period) and there has been interest in new vendors attending the summer market. Also, the Downing Park Farmers Market, which did not take place in 2015 was rejuvenated for 2016 and will likely continue in 2017.
 - v. Number of new markets established: 4 (Port Jervis, winter markets: Tuxedo, Warwick, Monroe)
 - vi. Market sales increased by \$unknown and increased by unknown %. This number was difficult to quantify for a number of reasons. 1) many of the market managers, although they were given the tools to quantify, didn't keep records. 2) the farmers were hesitant or unwilling to share their sales data. We were able to gather sales information for those markets that accepted SNAP benefits and asked for approximate increase or decrease in sales between 2014-2015 and 2015-2016. The responses for these markets were mixed. Although in the markets where the OC Coordinator worked closely with the market manager on localized outreach, it seems there was an increase in participation and a general sense of increase in sales. (The exception is in 2016 with the Healthy Orange Market in Newburgh. This past season, due to health issues one of the farmers faced, they were not able to attend consistently and this negatively affected total

market sales). Total dollar amount of SNAP sales has increased in 2016 over all markets, however, by approximately 4%. It is expected this number will be much higher in 2017, since this increase was due to the acceptance of SNAP on one additional market, but only for the last month of 2016. In 2017, a total of four markets will be certified and staffed to accept SNAP from the first day of the market. This is an increase of 100% from the 2014 (in 2015, three markets were certified to accept SNAP, but one of those markets – Walden-- was not fully operational and closed in 2016.)

- vii. Number of farmers/producers that have benefited from the project: There are a total of approximately 130 vendors at the markets in Orange County.
 - a. Percent Increase: Number of vendors between 2015-6 stayed the same. Data for 2014 was not available.

- 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?

While this project did not reach new ethnic groups, the promotional efforts and doubling the number of markets able to accept SNAP benefits expanded the reach into low-income populations. Additionally, greater outreach efforts in the WIC and DSS offices will hopefully result in a higher rate of WIC FMNP redemption rates and it has already shown to increase SNAP acceptance at markets (approximately 4%). Data for WIC redemption rates was not available at the time of this report.

Additionally, through the efforts of the Market Coordinator, relationships between the Orange County Veterans Affairs office and markets in the major cities of Orange County (Port Jervis, Middletown, Newburgh and Goshen) were created. This resulted in the distribution and redemption of 304 Veterans Fresh Connect coupon booklets (worth \$20 each) for a total of \$6,080. It is expected that these relationships will continue in future seasons and result in more veterans purchasing food at farmers' markets.

- 4. Discuss your community partnerships.
 - i. Who are your community partners? Veterans Affairs of Orange County (see above). Department of Social Services. WIC Offices of Orange County.
 - ii. How have they contributed to the overall results of the FMPP project? See above for greater explanation. WIC and DSS, and Veterans Affairs promoted markets to their clients. Veterans Affairs also attended markets to distribute Fresh Connect Coupons.
 - iii. How will they continue to contribute to your project's future activities, beyond the performance period of this FMPP grant? WIC and DSS were provided with outreach materials and will continue to promote markets in future years. They will be provided with outreach materials produced by the county in 2017 and beyond (market cards). DSS will print and distribute "how to use food stamps at farmers markets" indefinitely.
- 5. Are you using contractors to conduct the work? If so, how did their work contribute to the results of the FMPP project? Yes – our consultant, Kristy Apostolides, was the Orange County Farm Market Coordinator during the FMPP project.
- 6. Have you publicized any results yet?*

 - i. If yes, how did you publicize the results?
 - ii. To whom did you publicize the results?
 - iii. How many stakeholders (i.e. people, entities) did you reach?

*Send any publicity information (brochures, announcements, newsletters, etc.) electronically along with this report. Non-electronic promotional items should be digitally photographed and emailed with this report (do not send the actual item).

Results were included in two Newsletters that were emailed to all municipalities in Orange County. See attached (Report1.jpg, Report2.jpg). Final report will be posted on the County Website.

7. Have you collected any feedback from your community and additional stakeholders about your work?

- i. If so, how did you collect the information? An electronic survey was distributed to all market managers. Data about the market and their satisfaction with the Market Coordinator's work was collected at the end of 2015 and 2016. Additionally, Rapid Market Assessments were conducted at several farmers markets and the results provided to market managers. Market managers were also trained in RMA techniques and plan to use them in the future. See attached.
- ii. What feedback was relayed (specific comments)? Some comments offered by market managers and vendors are as follows (many of these were emailed to me directly):

"She was instrumental in rejuvenating this market - I couldn't say enough about how much she supported us every step of the way. She had an answer for every question and I don't think we could have done it without her knowledge."

"Thank you for all the support and the information."

"The help you provided with how to do a Rapid Market Assessment was very useful. You gave us good tools that we can continue to use. I think also just coming to the markets and giving "tips" on signage and stuff was helpful. Also you did the initial training. And you connected all the different managers with emails and such."

8. Budget Summary:

- i. 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:
- ii. 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. 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).

The successes of this project I think mostly revolved around three areas: the branding and online identity created for the markets, placing the markets more at the forefront for DSS and WIC staff, and training the market managers in techniques to strength their marketing through community connections and between market managers. It has already been proven that the branding is having continued effect, since the media is picking it up and spreading the information about the farmers markets without the intervention of any other individuals. It is expected this trend will continue (the Market Coordinator has

been contracted to continue social media outreach using the created brand). Additionally, the intervention by the Market Coordinator at the WIC and DSS offices reminded the staff people to talk about the market and the incentives that exist to encourage their clients to shop at the farmers markets. Just providing them with some materials and a few signs reinvigorated the staff's interest in talking about the market (and many of them visited their local markets themselves). It is expected this enthusiasm will continue, as there was a great amount of interest in the concepts. One of the most impactful things that were implemented in this grant was training the individuals to manage and organize local press and make connections with their local community groups. In this way any efforts on a countywide scale were multiplied because of local outreach reinforcing the regional effort. These techniques are an important part of creating a strong market and many of the managers now have a support network both locally (through the contacted community organization) and regionally, since all market managers have been put in contact with each other. If further funding is explored for this kind of work, it is suggested that much of the effort is focused on developing these outreach and community building skills locally, to compliment the regional efforts and ensure sustainability after the grant period ends.

Most of the difficulties encountered revolved around those communities of more limited resources. It takes more of an effort to sustain a market in an area where the clients are limited by time or money. However, it is useful that many of the markets have in relative proximity a mixed income level and taking advantage of this fact would greatly increase the strength and success of the market. The single major hurdle experienced to meet the goals of this grant was in finding host organizations to enable a market to become certified to accept SNAP benefits. An additional difficulty was the inability to track sales (due to either the farmer himself not tracking individual market sales or the market manager not willing or able to participate in measuring techniques).

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

One of the indicators mentioned in the grant was increasing sales. The data collected was based on a general feeling by the market managers rather than actual on site quantitative data gathering. There are a few reasons for this: 1) market managers were constrained by time and could not collect approximate data about consumer buying habits that could lead to a general understanding of the sales of the market 2) smaller farmers and vendors didn't sales by market location and/or were unwilling to share this data 3) market managers were uncomfortable asking farmers to provide sales information. In the future, it would be helpful to provide markets with an easy way to gather sales data from the consumer side. While this might not be the most accurate method, at least it would provide a general picture of sales from year to year and week to week within a season. That way advertising efforts can be matched to the sales trends over time.

- iii. Describe any lessons learned in the administration of the project that might be helpful for others who would want to implement a similar project:

The most difficult hurdle to overcome with this project was the process of certifying a market to accept SNAP benefits. This is due mostly to the fact that a dedicated bank account and therefore sponsoring organization is necessary in order for a market to certify to accept SNAP benefits. Many of the markets either have no supporting organization because they are a group of volunteers or the organization that supports the market was hesitant to host the SNAP benefits because of liability concerns. Additionally, there is still a bias and stigma attached to SNAP and the Market Coordinator experienced resistance from one hosting organization that resulted in failure to set up SNAP at one of the markets expected to participate (Middletown). Both of these issues could have been overcome if there was a regional organization in place that provided this service to markets.

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.

In addition to those initiatives mentioned above (community-based connections market managers were trained to develop and the heightened awareness, promotion provided by the WIC and DSS offices, Veterans Affairs Office promoting farmers markets, and the connections made between the market managers) the following initiatives will likely continue: Two market manager positions created (Newburgh, Port Jervis) and sales will increase at markets now certified to accept SNAP.

- 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?

Please see attached document (LFPP or FMPP 2017 (3).doc) for an outline of additional project initiatives that would build on and complement the work completed in 2015-6.