

**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:	September 30, 2015 - September 29, 2017
Authorized Representative Name:	Shaun Tilghman
Authorized Representative Phone:	(260) 347-4714
Authorized Representative Email:	Stilghman@region3a.org
Recipient Organization Name:	Town of LaGrange
Project Title as Stated on Grant Agreement:	LaGrange Farmers' Market Enhancement Project
Grant Agreement Number:	15-FMPPIN0039
Year Grant was Awarded:	2015
Project City/State:	LaGrange, Indiana
Total Awarded Budget:	\$60,816.26

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: Nancy Block, Market Master; nancyblock09@ligtel.com; Phone: (260) 499-0087

According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, an agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB control number. The valid OMB control number for this information collection is 0581-0287. The time required to complete this information collection is estimated to average 4 hours per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, and where applicable sex, marital status, or familial status, parental status religion, sexual orientation, genetic information, political beliefs, reprisal, or because all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program (not all prohibited bases apply to all programs). Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TDD). To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call (800) 795-3272 (voice) or (202) 720-6382 (TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

1. State the goals/objectives of your project as outlined in the grant narrative and/or approved by FMPP staff. If the goals/objectives from the narrative have changed from the grant narrative, please highlight those changes (e.g. "new objective," "new contact," "new consultant," etc.). You may add additional goals/objectives if necessary. For each item below, qualitatively discuss the progress made and indicate the impact on the community, if any.
 - i. **Goal/Objective 1:** Promote awareness and expand WIC/Senior Certified farmers' market in effort to provide access to locally produced foods and goods to low income families.
 - a. **Progress Made:** Invited WIC to take part in the market by offering them a free table.
 - b. **Impact on Community:** WIC representatives handed out info during each market at no cost to the organization. In the end, members of the community were much more aware of the benefits and aid provided by the local WIC/Senior Certified farmers' market.
 - ii. **Goal/Objective 2:** Increase vendor participation (i.e. the core group of vendors who participate every week). 2016: Increase the number of WIC/Senior certified vendors by 79% (from 14-25 vendors each week). 2017: Increase the total number (combined WIC and other) by 35% (from 26-35 vendors per week).
 - a. **Progress Made:** Increased from 15 to 31 core vendors each week.
 - b. **Impact on Community:** More participating vendors means more products available to the community, thus attendance will also increase. Members of the community became more aware of what items were offered by each vendor and even began to make advance orders/special requests.
 - iii. **Goal/Objective 3:** Increase the number of customer traffic from 250 customers (in 2014). 2016: 100% increase from 250 to 500 customers per week (May - Oct. 2016). 2017: Triple patronage to 750 customers per week (May - Oct. 2017).
 - a. **Progress Made:** Increased total customers per week to approximately 400.
 - b. **Impact on Community:** Ultimately, the goals for increased customer traffic were not achieved; however, the increase that did occur resulted in additional sales for the local farmers/vendors. The largest increases in customer traffic were observed when there was good weather, and during those weeks, various local businesses reported increases in customer traffic as well, which can most likely be attributed to visiting customers of the farmers' market.
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, 2015). Include further explanation if necessary.
 - i. **Number of direct jobs created:** None, because the Market Master was already fulfilling her current duties.
 - ii. **Number of jobs retained:** 16, including the Market Master & 15 returning core vendors.
 - iii. **Number of indirect jobs created:** Sixteen new core vendors.
 - iv. **Number of markets expanded:** One, the LaGrange Farmers' Market.
 - v. **Number of new markets established:** Zero.
 - vi. **Market sales increased by \$50.00** (approx. \$200→\$250 on Saturdays) **& by \$25.00** (approx. \$100→\$125 on Tuesdays) **and increased by 25%** (on Saturdays & Tuesdays).
 - vii. **Number of farmers/producers that have benefited from the project:** Approximately 27.
 - a. **Percent Increase:** Increase of 80%.

3. **Did you expand your customer base by reaching new populations such as new ethnic groups, additional low income/low access populations, new businesses, etc.? If so, how?** Yes, the market expanded its customer base on several fronts, including race; in fact, the Market Master identified the Hispanic and Asian ethnicities as being more prevalent. The market also appealed to low-income individuals, as well as low-access/elderly individuals, by not only accepting WIC Senior Vouchers, but also by becoming SNAP approved. They also created the “1st Saturday” theme to offer a program on the first Saturday of each month focused on helping children learn about healthy eating habits. In addition, the market partners with the hospital and the Indiana University Extension Office to provide healthy fruit and vegetable options.

4. **Discuss your community partnerships.**

- i. **Who are your community partners?** LaGrange Hospital, Indiana University Extension, Habitat for humanity, LaGrange Library, AARP, and the local schools.
- ii. **How have they contributed to the overall results of the FMPP project?** The hospital and Indiana University Extension help offer healthy choices in terms of fruits and vegetables, while the library and local schools assist in overall promotion, as well as the 1st Saturday program.
- iii. **How will they continue to contribute to your project’s future activities, beyond the performance period of this FMPP grant?** They all remain involved, regardless of the timeframe; in fact, they consistently setup booths during the annual Strawberry Fest and Pumpkin Fest, respectively, to continue educating people and getting the word out about the market and its related events.

5. **Are you using contractors to conduct the work?** Yes, we established contracted rates for the duration of the grant period with the following: Bullfrog Outdoor Advertising, Inc.; Gateway Shopper; LaGrange Publishing Co.; Miller’s Sign Co., Inc.; Region 3-A Dev. & RPC; Schlemmer’s Hardware; Swick Broadcasting Co.; & Taylor Rental Center. **If so, how did their work contribute to the results of the FMPP project?** Each of the businesses/organizations that we work with for the market accommodated our needs by contracting goods and/or services for the two-year period (two market seasons) so that we could lock in the rates.

6. **Have you publicized any results yet?*** Yes.

- i. **If yes, how did you publicize the results?** Results were publicized during reports to the Town Council.
- ii. **To whom did you publicize the results?** To anyone present at the Town Council meetings, or to anyone who asked about the market’s progress.
- iii. **How many stakeholders (i.e. people, entities) did you reach?** Approximately 10-15 individuals at each of the Town Council meetings, and approximately 3-5 individuals per week that would inquire regarding the market.

***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?** Yes.

- i. **If so, how did you collect the information?** People made comments verbally during conversations with the Market Master, who then wrote them down in a journal to keep track.

- ii. **What feedback was relayed (specific comments)?** Initial comments were that people like the market where it was before, but by the end people were starting to appreciate the new space. Additionally, the Market Master now reports that three restaurants purchase fresh vegetables and baked goods from the market every week.

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?** Yes, the project generated \$40 from the sale of reusable tote bags.
 - a. **If yes, how much was generated and how was it used to further the objectives of the award?** The \$40 was deposited back into the account for the project, and expended in accordance with the addition alternative. Ultimately, the \$40 was de-obligated from the award amount; thus, reducing the Federal share of the total costs by said amount.

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).** According to the Market Master, it has been an experience overall. One of her favorite experiences personally was taking a canning class through the University of California so that she could then teach her vendors the correct way to can. She also lists becoming SNAP-approved as a challenge, but ultimately a positive because of how much it helps people. They have also made progress in the community, as the board of health inspected and certified their homes with regards to the wonderful baked goods they produce – people even call to reserve items as a result.
- ii. **If goals or outcome measures were not achieved, identify and share the lessons learned to help others expedite problem-solving:** The Market Master openly admits that keeping her vendors has been the biggest challenge she’s faced. “We have rules and regulations in LaGrange County that I am actually working on, and hopefully they will be adjusted for 2018,” she said. “We have made progress, but it’s still frustrating because there is a farmers’ market in Howe that’s been established for more than 15 years. They even had people coming to our farmers’ market just to promote theirs; but, many of my vendors did start to stay more consistently because they were selling out here.”
- 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:** According to the Market Master, the biggest lesson she has learned is to just listen to everyone’s ideas equally, and to thank them for their suggestions regardless of how “good” they ultimately turn out to be. She also learned that she has to prioritize the things that she tries to take on for the market, because at times she says it can get overwhelming, and that’s why it’s important not to overburden herself – she can easily save some ideas for the next season rather than trying to pack everything in immediately.

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.** The Market Master would like to focus on getting the word out, even more than it already is, about being approved through SNAP, as well as their ability to accept WIC Senior Vouchers. "We are a very poor area and we need help educating members of our community about the healthy choices available," she added. "I would also like to increase our children's activities offered, as well as educating my vendors in such areas as: the importance of proper handwashing, cleaning vegetables, and labeling their products."
- 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 the previous response as it relates to all current recommendations/goals for the future.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT Market master wants everyone to have access to produce

BY PATRICK REDMOND
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LAGRANGE — Even though it's still two weeks away from the first day of spring, LaGrange's Nancy Block thinks of almost nothing but the summer.

Block is the market master for the LaGrange Farmers Market, and it's her job to grow and nurture it toward what she believes is its full potential.

"I just want to make sure everybody has fresh fruit and vegetables," she said.

This newest version of the LaGrange market is only four years old, and already it has hit a few bumps in the road. For starters, the market has moved three times now — from an empty lot across the street from the LaGrange County Courthouse, to the street outside of the LaGrange

NEIGHBORS

More online

For video with Nancy Block, visit kpcnews.com/videos



County Public Library and finally to its home in the parking lot of the LaGrange Town Hall.

"I love it here," Block said of the new site. "Look at all that parking."

Block is a Chicago native who fell in love with this area after visiting Shippewana time and time again. An Illinois master gardener and former Chicago master gardener of the year, she and her husband moved to rural LaGrange after he retired.

"We were looking for a simpler life," she said.

Gardening is still a passion for Block, who maintains a nearly two-acre garden on her own property. She takes a lot of pride in the produce she grows for her family. But she also passionately believes everyone — especially seniors — ought to have access to fresh, locally grown fruits and vegetables, even if they no longer can garden.

That is why she puts so much of her heart into the LaGrange Farmers Market.

Local farmers markets appear to be flourishing. Howe's farmers market has enjoyed more than 20 straight years of success.

But LaGrange's market has struggled. When Block first arrived in the area, she said the

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PATRICK RED

Nancy Block, who runs the LaGrange Farmers Market, still is working on the plan for this year's market, which begins May 6. The market once again will set up in the parking lot of LaGrange Town Hall.

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FARMERS MARKET

VENDORS NEEDED
Call Nancy 260-499-0087

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PHOTO COURTESY

Vendors sell items at last year's LaGrange Farmers Market. Market organizer Nancy Block said 45 vendors have expressed an interest in joining the LaGrange Farmers Market this year.

FOOD: Celebrates its first Strawberry Festival this year

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market was basically one lone vendor.

"I remember thinking, 'That's it?'" she said.

So she made it her goal to bring the LaGrange market back and better than ever.

Now that the market appears to have found its home, Block is confident it will grow and prosper.

"I've been working on it all winter," Block said, pointing to a large, black binder she uses to keep all the market paperwork in. "I've got so much done. I've been working on getting my billboard and my radio ads all together."

Thanks to a grant from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Block once again can advertise the farmers market. Last year, she received a similar grant and used some of that money to purchase a few billboards in the area.

"Last year, a lot of people told me they saw my billboard, and that's why they came

down," Block said.

This year, the market officially opens Saturday, May 6, but Block said there's a lot of work waiting to be done before then.

For starters, she needs to meet with the vendors and talk to them about their ideas for this summer's market. Last year, Block said, she had 31 vendors. This year, 45 people have asked to be included.

"We'll be meeting on Saturday, April 1, at Chicago Joe's in LaGrange at 2:00 o'clock," she said. "If anyone else wants to be a vendor, they can come to that meeting, or call me at 499-0087."

Block charges vendors \$20 to set up for the season.

"That basically covered the cost of insurance," she said.

Block said having several other farmers markets around the area doesn't hurt anyone. They aren't competing against one another, just serving different populations. Block works hard to ensure

what gets sold at the LaGrange Farmers Market is local and fresh. She said she works with the county Health Department so all the baked goods are properly prepared and packaged.

In addition, she's had conversations with the LaGrange County Council on Aging to provide seniors with transportation to the market on the first Tuesday of each month. Block has partnered with the LaGrange County Public Library to have a children's program at the market the first Saturday of every month.

And this year, the market will celebrate its first Strawberry Festival.

"June 3, oh my gosh, it's going to be so big," Block said. "We'll have a bouncy house, paid for by Focus LaGrange. The dairy farmers will be there. Schlemmer's (Hardware is sponsoring a pie-eating contest, a strawberry pie-eating contest. It's going to be really awesome."