

**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>	October 1, 2015 - September 30, 2017
Authorized Representative Name:	Dena Leibman
Authorized Representative Phone:	240-413-9495
Authorized Representative Email:	dena@futureharvestcasa.org
Recipient Organization Name:	Future Harvest Chesapeake Alliance for Sustainable Agiculture
Project Title as Stated on Grant Agreement:	Increasing Supply and Demand for Locally and Sustainably Grown Food through Direct-to-Consumer Education, Training, and Awareness Building for Maryland and Delmarva Farmers and Consumers
Grant Agreement Number: <i>(e.g. 14-FMPPX-XX-XXXX)</i>	15FMPPMD0003
Year Grant was Awarded:	2015
Project City/State:	Cockeysville, MD
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: _____

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.**

This project sought to significantly increase both supply and demand for regionally produced food in the Chesapeake region by providing comprehensive farmer and consumer education, training, networking, and awareness raising. Aging farmers, lack of direct-to-consumer access, and lackluster markets keep the local food supply low and under production. This low supply, coupled with consumers who aren't sure how to access local food and where to buy it, creates a conundrum that can be easily rectified with both farmer and consumer training and DTC-focused educational events. It is possible to have thriving, economically-viable farm economies that also help to support healthy, vibrant communities.

Goal 1: Develop and implement outreach, training, and networking opportunities to build new market opportunities for farm and ranch operations serving local markets.

Objective 1: Develop and implement two new DTC-focused workshops for our Beginner Farmer Training Program winter workshop series.

a. Progress Made:

Each year, FHCASA partners with UME to put together a winter workshop series in Baltimore County, MD that is focused specifically on the needs of beginning small, intensive market farmers. The series is open to the general public, but also forms the core classroom component of our year-long Beginner Farmer Training Program (BFTP). The majority of workshop attendees are interested in small-scale vegetable and fruit production. Many of them are interested in or are already selling via DTC channels, including farmers markets and CSAs. This grant has enabled us to significantly increase the marketing component of the workshop series.

In 2016, we added 2 new DTC-focused workshops to the series:

The first workshop, “Envisioning Your Farm and Business Plan” focused on identifying the best DTC marketing channels for the needs of each attendee's particular farm. This was an interactive workshop in which a group of 50 participants engaged in drafting business model canvases for their farms, and split up into small, moderated discussion groups.

The second workshop. “Small Farm Business and Marketing Experiences Panel” was focused specifically on programs that help make it financially feasible for local farmers to sell directly to low-income consumers. This workshop was done in partnership with the Maryland Farmers Market Association (MDFMA). MDFMA staff spoke to a group of approximately 40 participants about federal nutrition benefits redemption at farmers markets, and how farmers can use these programs to not only sell directly to low-income communities but boost their income in the process. We ran this for a second time in 2017.

In 2017, we developed and implemented two DTC-focused workshops as part of the "Starting a Small, Intensive, Commercial Farm for Local Markets" winter workshop series run in partnership with University of Maryland Extension (UME).

In 2017, we had 55 winter workshop participants and we ran one repeat and one new (2017) DTC-focused workshop:

New workshop called "Marketing Essentials: A Key Part of the Business Plan", held on January 25, 2017, focused on identifying the best marketing channels (mostly DTC) for the needs of each attendee's particular farm. This interactive workshop split participants into small, moderated discussion groups and engaged them in drafting business model canvases for their farms.

The second workshop we offered in 2017 (a successful repeat from 2016), "Small Farm Business and Marketing Panel" (March 22, 2017) focused on educating local farmers on how to sell directly to low-income consumers and still make a profit. As in 2016, this workshop was done in partnership with the Maryland Farmers Market Association (MDMFA).

b. Impact on Community:

During the last two years, the BFTP has gained real traction, growing from 28 trainees in 2016 to 70 in 2017. FMPP funds for direct-to-consumer trainings at the BFTP winter workshop series, field education events, conference sessions, and special BFTP programming have helped our trainees learn essential marketing skills before they start growing, and has provided our graduates with real market outlets, like the online marketplace Chesapeake Farm to Table - a tangible way to step up both supply and demand.

Objective 2: Develop and implement three beginner-level and two intermediate- to advanced-level DTC workshops for our field programming.

c. Progress Made: In total, our DTC Beginner and Intermediate workshop events have reached more than 450 people in a two-year period. Below shows a snapshot of several of the field education events that featured direct-to-consumer components.

Beginner Level DTC Workshops Summary

Building a Website to Tell Your Farm's Story Webinar

Consumer Education through Agritourism event at PA Bowen Farm.

The Farm at Sunnyside in Washington, VA included a central component on how to direct market a wide range of products from ginger to winter squash.

CSA Full-Diet Marketing at Charm Farm in West Virginia.

Agritourism on Your Farm at Rocklands Farm.

Full-Day Farm Business Workshop with Richard Wiswall -

WIC, Seniors FMNP, and SNAP Training to reach low-income consumers -

Intermediate-Level DTC Workshops Summary

Horse-Powered Viability at Flying Plow Farm, at Flying Plow Farm in Cecil County, MD.

From Veggies to Flowers, Sustainably at Tierra Blooms in Taneytown MD.

Marketing and Pasture Walk at Heritage Hollow & Bean Hollow Grassfed Farms

Marketing and Pasture Walk at Liberty Delight Farms in Reisterstown, MD

b. Impact on Community:

These events educated new and established farmers and value-added producers about how to access and work best in DTC markets, with the aim of increasing the number of producers selling direct. The majority of our field days have taken place on farms that include DTC sales and our presenters shared many marketing tips on the challenges and opportunities they face.

Objective 3: Develop and implement a full-day pre-conference workshop at our annual Cultivate the Chesapeake Foodshed conference. Two-year reach: 400 farmers and food businesses.

a. Progress Made:

We met the first half of this objective with a series of pre-conference sessions held at our January 2016 conference. These DTC sessions included “Direct Marketing Skill-BUILDER I: Telling Your Story for Press, Online, and in Print” and “Direct Marketing Skill-BUILDER II: How to Use Food Access Tools to Increase Sales and Market Reach.” We also featured a farmers market manager course on boosting sales via food access tools such as SNAP and WIC.

We included a robust DTC program for farmers and consumers at our 2017 Conference. Some of our FMPP-relevant sessions at the 2017 Conference included:

- Make Your Farm Brand Go Viral -- Preconference skill builder
- Market Scoper Panel -- Pre-conference panel of reps discussing pros and cons of a wide array of direct marketing outlets: CSAs, farmers markets, home delivery, and more.
- Free certification course for farmers on how to use Farmers Market Nutrition Program and begin accepting WIC and SNAP coupons at both Maryland and DC markets.
- Chef Gjerde and Ridge Shinn Go Back to the Future for Local Meat -- session on meat aggregation for more efficient marketing.
- Understanding Your Farm Financials -- session on finances
- The Cream of the Farm-to-School Crop -- session on how to access schools as markets
- Market Opp, A Convo with Buyers of Ugly Produce -- marketing seconds session
- The Wholesale Market -- session for DTC farmers thinking of tapping this market
- Discovering the Mighty PawPaw -- marketing and production session

b. Impact on Community:

In total, we exceeded our goal of 400 participants *just in the specific marketing conference sessions* (many more attended other sessions that had marketing pieces) through our Annual Conference. Further, we believe that by offering an actual certification opportunity at the conference, we will tangibly increase the number of farmers using food access tools in the future.

Goal 2: Create a consumer outreach campaign to increase domestic consumption of and access to locally and regionally produced agricultural products.

c. Progress Made:

Over a two year period, as part of our Consumer Outreach Campaign, we designed, published, and distributed the following DTC materials:

1. The Amazing Grazing Directory (Reach: 10,000)
2. Amazing Grazing Web-Based Consumer Map (Online) (Reach: 510)
3. "Our Farms, Our Future" Infographic (Reach: 3500)
4. Earth Day Flyer (Reach: 7500)
5. "Five Reasons to Go Grassfed" Infographic (Reach: 2000)
6. Suite of Recipe Cards (Online & Print) (Reach: 7500)
7. Farmer Profiles (Online- Newsletter and Website) (Reach: 38,691)

During this two-year period, not only did we develop and distribute the Amazing Grazing Directory, Our Farms, Our Future Infographic, Grassfed Infographic, and suite of recipe cards, we also developed and shared new farmer profiles with a focus on DTC marketing, including those that profile Virginia Eastern Shore growers. We shared infographics through social media, our newsletters, and at displays at our annual conference and other public events. Our social media outreach reaches thousands of people per month with a large jump exceeding 40,000 around the conference and other large events. We have experienced a 54% increase in "Likes" on Facebook since the inception of this FMPP grant. We have reached 204,968 Facebook viewers since October of 2015 and 162,163 Twitter viewers. On average, we have around 350 views per day. We also distributed an educational flyer to 7,500 households on Virginia's Eastern Shore about the importance of eating fresh fruits and vegetables, the opening of farmers markets, and inviting families to an Earth Day event with local farmers and cooking demonstrations.

d. Impact on Community:

These infographics, directories, and profiles connect in-the-know consumers as well as less-aware consumers in direct contact with farms and farmers that are using sustainable practices and allows for greater access and awareness to their products. Our targeted social media efforts and newsletter expanded our reach and these combined efforts have helped us to exceed our goal.

Quantify the overall impact of the project on the intended beneficiaries, if applicable, from the baseline date (the start of the award performance period, October 1, 2015- September 30, 2017).

Include further explanation if necessary.

Number of direct jobs created: **28 BFTP (2016) + 70 BFTP (2017) = 98 Total**

Number of jobs retained: **575 (2016 workshops and 2016 conference)+ 1320 (2017 workshops + 2017 conference) = 1895 Total**

Number of indirect jobs created: n/a

Number of markets expanded: n/a

Number of new markets established: n/a (but we have introduced 16 total top DC area chefs to farmers in the DC/Baltimore/Northern Virginia area through our Chesapeake Foodshed Feast as well as numerous farmers.. We also have 7 + BFTP grads selling through Chesapeake Farm to Table.

Market sales increased by \$n/a and increased by n/a%.

Number of farmers/producers that have benefited from the project: **500+**

e. Percent Increase: a. **40% (this is because this project enabled us to do more focused DTC trainings and field education events.**

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. We are constantly reaching new beginner farmers through our Beginning Farmer Training Program, our Field Events, Annual Conference, and general day-to-day outreach. One specific example of our reaching new populations through our FMPP award is described here with our Earth Day event held back in April. This spring, we partnered with ESRDC to promote an Earth Day event on the Lower Eastern Shore. This event was specifically targeted to minority and low-income groups on the Eastern Shore that might not otherwise have access to this information. Since reaching members of the Latino and African American communities in Northampton and Accomack Counties is extremely difficult, we decided to use the public and private school systems as a key partner for our direct-to-consumer outreach program. We met with the respective School Superintendents at both counties to get buy in to reach out to the 7,500 students and families of students with a multi-faceted program to stimulate the healthy benefits associated with consuming more fruits and vegetables. The plan would require substantial printing costs, and very labor intensive personal distribution to the individual schools, meeting with each principal or guidance counselor to engage them in promotion and support of the materials and event..

Additional examples of this work include a workshop we ran entitled, "Small Farm Business and Marketing Experiences Panel" focused on farmer sales to low-income communities through the use of food access tools. The workshop received very positive feedback. Also, this year 30% of our Beginner Farmer Trainees are farmers of color and we gave 10 scholarships to the FHCASA conference to low-income producers and to farmers market managers. We also expanded the number of farms included in our **Amazing Grazing** directory and have reached a great number of consumers (see above) via online and print distribution of our newest infographics, including the "Our Farms, Our Future" and "Go Grassfed" rack cards.

Discuss your community partnerships.

Who are your community partners?

We work closely with a large network of community partners: UMD Extension, Maryland Farmers Market Association, Chesapeake Bay Foundation, Eastern Shore of Virginia Resource Conservation and Development Council (ESRDC), the Chesapeake Foodshed Network, Maryland Grazers Network, Mountains-to-Bay Grazing Alliance, Central Farm Markets, MDA, DOH, and about 16 area chefs. We also have worked with Crossroads Community Kitchen, Grow and Fortify, and hundreds of farmers who served as educators and trainers for the numerous workshops conducted as part of this grant.

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

By using a large network of community partners we are able to extend our reach beyond our normal constituents, folding more consumers and the interested public into the fold as well as farmers.

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

These partners will continue to provide technical expertise on food access tools and marketing; provide access to more consumers, producers, and wholesalers, and farmers. And we will continue to work with them on other food system and farmer training projects in the Chesapeake.

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

Yes, during this project we used a graphic designer to help us design and publish the “Our Farms Our Future” infographic and the **Amazing Grazing** directory. In the middle of the grant period, we hired a full-time communications manager who designed the rest of the materials. We also used one of our partner organizations, ESCRDC as a contractor to help us reach low-income consumers on the Eastern Shore. They ultimately developed a plan for promoting local foods to low-income consumers via food access tools, most of which is centered around Earth Day activities.

Have you publicized any results yet?* Yes.

If yes, how did you publicize the results?

We created several infographics that were printed and mass distributed at many public events. We also have several pieces that live online and are available for sharing/viewing 24 hours/day, 7 days/week.

To whom did you publicize the results?

The general public, our FHCASA membership, the 8000 people on our eblast list, and through farm-to-consumer events, such as our annual Chesapeake Foodshed Feast. Our publications were printed (and housed online) specifically to target consumers and connect them to local farms, farmers, and the many benefits of eating locally. So, everything was targeted to public consumers and farmers that want to reach more consumers. In addition to the print and online materials, we also published a webinar, “Building a Website to Tell Your Farm's Story”. This webinar is posted on our website and is still in use.

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

The Amazing Grazing Directory (**Reach: 10,000**)

Amazing Grazing Web-Based Consumer Map (Online) (**Reach: 510**)

“Our Farms, Our Future” Infographic (**Reach: 3500**)

Earth Day Flyer (**Reach: 7500**)

“Five Reasons to Go Grassfed” Infographic (**Reach: 2000**)

Suite of Recipe Cards (Online & Print) (**Reach: 7500**)

Farmer Profiles (Online- Newsletter and Website) (**Reach: 38,181**)

Webinar Building a Website to Tell Your Farm's Story (**Reach: 65 and continuing to grow**)

Total: 69, 191 *All print materials are attached to this report.

Additionally, **since October 2015** (inception of this FMPP grant), we have experienced the following:

*Newsletter distribution has increased from 3500 (2015) to 7300 (2017)

*54% increase in “Likes” on Facebook

*204,968 Facebook viewers

*162,163 Twitter viewers

*On average, our website enjoys 350 views per day

*Our social media outreach reaches thousands of people per month with a large jump exceeding 40,000 around the conference and other large events.

*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).

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

Yes.

If so, how did you collect the information?

We conducted post-event surveys after each DTC workshop. We also conducted surveys of our BFTP trainees at the end of their training period- this will happen again in November 2017. Our pre-conference attendees were polled shortly after each of our winter conferences.

What feedback was relayed (specific comments)?

Building a Website to Tell Your Farm's Story (Webinar): "Good and useful information" was a specific comment given in relation to an attendee's experience with our webinar. 80% of attendees learned something at this field day that was applicable to their current or future farm operation, 75% were highly likely to apply what they learned at this event to their current or future farm operation, and over 80% rated the overall value of this information to their operation as good or excellent.

2016 Pre-Conference: Gathering data and feedback from our post-conference survey, most pre-conference attendees felt the pre-conference workshops were of "fair" to "excellent" value. 60% felt that our DTC workshop, "Direct Marketing Skill-BUILDER I: Telling Your Story for Press, Online, and in Print" was "very informative" and 60% felt that the second DTC workshop: "Direct Marketing Skill-BUILDER II: How to Use Food Access Tools to Increase Sales and Market Reach" was "very informative." Does this need an update?

2017 Pre-Conference: Most pre-conference attendees felt the pre-conference workshops were of "fair" to "excellent" value. 60% felt that our DTC workshop, "Make Your Farm Brand Go Viral" was "very informative" and 56% felt that the second DTC workshop: "Market Scoper: Which Market is Right for You?" was "very informative." This was nearly in line with the feedback we received in 2016. 70% of the growers that attended the WIC/SNAP certification course that was offered during the pre-conference felt it was "very informative." This was a new offering this year that allowed us to provide farmers with a tool that enables them to better serve low-income/low-access consumers.

Also, we have had several farmers market managers request additional DTC brochures and infographics as they have distributed more than we had originally printed.

Budget Summary:

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: X

Did the project generate any income? Yes.

f. If yes, how much was generated and how was it used to further the objectives of the award?

Yes, our 2016 annual conference generated \$42,000. We also generated income in 2016 from our field program fees, about \$3000. Our 2017 annual conference generated ~\$41,000. Our 2017 field program fees to date are about \$3000. Note that only about one-eighth of these revenues can be attributed directly to FMPP-related events. These unrestricted funds are used to support our programming throughout the year and will be re-invested in DTC-related programming to continue the grant's work, especially in ways that help livestock producers who raise meat on pasture.

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).**

We learned early on in the FMPP project that we needed to narrow the focus of the awareness raising campaign to increase effectiveness. So we focused materials on stepping up awareness of the benefits of buying local grassfed products. This meant we could concentrate our energy on building out our **Amazing Grazing** directory, expanding from around 120 producers to more than 200, and develop more topical materials to set the stage for the next steps in the project. For example, we hope to continue our grassfed campaign by continuing distribution of the materials we've created, adding more producers to the directory, forming Go Grassfed buying clubs to generate more demand for grassfed products, and offering more consumer and producer education events around the benefits of consuming and producing livestock and poultry on pasture.

We also learned that Virginia's Eastern Shore's demographics did not lend themselves to a Buy Local-type of project. The area has one of the highest poverty rates in the region so we felt our focus should be more relevant to people struggling to make ends meet. Thus on the shore we focused on the health benefits of eating fresh produce by holding an Earth Day event around the topic and producing a healthy food brochure and engaging schools in both the brochure's distribution to children and attendance at the event. The event had great turnout and support.

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

- 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:**

Applicants must include ample administrative time -- for a grants administrator and a bookkeeper -- to develop and file the narrative and financial reports. It is best to track as you go along so that it doesn't all pile up at the end.

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.**

Future work on this project is one of the most exciting results of this grant. Over the past two years we have developed and put in place all the pieces for the next level of consumer engagement in buying locally produced grassfed products, especially with pastured animals taking a front and center role in the blossoming soil health movement. The consumer and producer education and outreach possibilities are many, including grassfed product expos; greater distribution of our existing materials; developing new materials around the benefits of healthy meat leading to healthy soil; and forming buying clubs for more tangible and trackable results. We will continue to work with partners in an effort to engage low-income communities, such as deepening producer use of food access tools and increasing Future Harvest education activities.

- 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?**

Our narrative above lays out some ideas for next steps. Again, we are excited to continue this project and will seek funding to do so. Thank you to USDA for its support of our work in this area.