

Farmers Market Promotion Program Final Performance Report

The interim report provides a status update regarding the progress made toward the objectives of your grant proposal. 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 6 pages and is due every 6 months. You have **30 days** from that date to provide the report (meaning the reports will usually be due April 30 and October 31).

Provide answers to each question below, or answer “not applicable” or “no results available yet” where necessary. It is recommended that you email or fax your completed performance report to your assigned FMPP grant specialist to avoid delays. Should you need to mail your documents via hard copy, contact FMPP staff to obtain mailing instructions: FMPP Phone: 202-690-4152; Fax: 202-720-0300.

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| Report Date Range: <i>(e.g. October 1-March 31, 20XX)</i> | 4/1/2017-9/30/2017 |
| Today's Date: | 4/25/2017 |
| Authorized Representative Name: | Leigh Hallett |
| Authorized Representative Phone: | 207-487-7114 |
| Authorized Representative Email: | director@mffm.org |
| Recipient Organization Name: | Maine Federation of Farmers' Markets |
| Project Title as Stated on Grant Agreement: | Increasing Access and Consumption Through Maine Farmers' Market Snapshot Week |
| Grant Agreement Number: <i>(e.g. 15-FMPPX-XX-XXXX)</i> | 15-FMPP-ME-004 |
| Year Grant was Awarded: | 2015 |
| Project City/State: | Pittsfield, ME |
| Total Awarded Budget: | 99,000 |

1. Summarize the community need for the grant work:

There was a need for a statewide farmers' market promotion, raising awareness about where and how to find FMs. There was little awareness of National Farmers' Market Week, and thus very little public engagement or celebration of the event. Lastly, there was little public awareness of the state's farmers' market community, particularly its geographic and product diversity.

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.

2. 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 and have been approved by FMPP staff, please highlight those changes (e.g. “new objective”, “new contact”, “new consultant”, etc.). For each item below, qualitatively discuss the progress made toward each one and indicate the impact on the community, if any. You may add additional goals/objectives if necessary.
 - i. Goal/Objective 1: Increase consumer awareness about Maine farmers’ markets
 - a. One key part of Y1 of this project was building a **new web page** for MFFM. That web page launched in Jan 2016, and has been in use for 18+ months. It is hard to overemphasize the positive impact of the website. Some of the key outcomes (progress made) include:
 - It is compatible with hand-held devices like smartphones and tablets, and over 60% of people using our website now are doing so via mobile device. (Our old website was *not* compatible with devices.)
 - The new site has a handy form for users to request more information. The feature is used evenly by consumers and by farmer/vendors. (Consumers often use it to ask questions about particular markets, and vendors often use it with questions about applying to markets.) This mobile-friendly feature has made it possible for people to communicate with us very easily, and therefore increased the number of people with whom we communicate and the types of questions we are answering. We receive 4-8 of these requests per week.
 - The new site shows up more readily in Google searches. In fact, for most Maine farmers’ markets, when someone does a search for the market’s name, the first site on the search results is the MFFM page (sometimes the first several sites). This is particularly important because a large percentage of the markets rely on Facebook as their sole digital presence, but many consumers are reluctant to use Facebook or have trouble finding the information they seek. (As an example, the Brunswick Farmers’ Market page on our website was viewed by 465 different users in August alone.)
 - b. Another key component to the campaign to raise awareness about Maine’s farmers’ markets was the **statewide promotional campaign**. The grant enabled us to develop an organized campaign that extended across various media (print, radio, TV, social) and over 2 years. We now have established a set of coordinated, effective, recognizable graphics, hashtags, and taglines. This project resulted in a huge leap forward in our overall promotional capacity beyond what it would have been without all the professional inputs the grant funded.
 - c. Impact on Community: The project impacted consumers by providing better tools to help them find farmers’ markets and local foods, by providing opportunities for them to interact directly with each other and their markets through Snapshot Week, and by raising awareness about the importance of local food and Maine’s direct-to-consumer landscape. For the markets themselves, this project provided the first ever statewide marketing campaign, countless tools to be adopted and adapted locally, and data to better inform future decisions.
 - ii. Goal/Objective 2: Develop, promote, and celebrate Maine Farmers’ Market Snapshot Week
 - a. Progress Made: The second annual Maine Farmers’ Market Snapshot Week took place August 6-12. Approximately 50 markets participated formally, and many

more participated informally. (*The Bangor Daily News*, one of two statewide papers, published a feature story, Maine Public covered it, and several local papers carried articles about the events at area markets.)

- b. Impact on Community: For the second year in a row, Maine's farmers' markets were united in celebrating National Farmers' Market Week by participating in Maine Farmers' Market Snapshot Week. Widespread participation meant that the messages were amplified, and because our team had planned the messages carefully, they had more impact than if the various markets had either created their own messages or even adopted national materials.
 - iii. Goal/Objective 3: Analyze and share results of MFMSW and publish/share report
 - a. Progress Made: The aggregate data from the producer and shopper surveys has been analyzed, and key information included in the annual report.
 - b. Impact on Community: The data has been very useful, informing a range of projects. One market has already used their local data to negotiate with the local town council and planning board regarding a zoning issue. Another farmer used aggregate data to testify at a legislative hearing regarding food safety. (She used information about the frequency with which people attend farmers' markets to argue against lowering food safety requirements.)
3. Quantify the overall impact of the project on the intended beneficiaries, if applicable. Include further explanation if necessary.
- i. Number of direct jobs created: 0
 - ii. Number of jobs retained: 130
 - iii. Number of indirect jobs created: 55
 - iv. Number of markets expanded: 12
 - v. Number of new markets established: 0
 - vi. Market sales increased by \$4M_ and increased by NA%.
 - vii. Number of farmers/producers that have benefited from the project, per year: 800 in the markets directly participating in Snapshot Week; we estimate 1700 benefitted from the statewide advertising campaign

We conservatively estimate that the advertising from this campaign resulted in \$400,000 in additional sales in August 2017 alone. Over the course of the 2 years of the project, and multiple months per year, we estimate that the advertising from this project resulted in \$2M in increased sales from June-Sept in 2016 and 2017. The improved website (directing consumers to markets) conservatively resulted in an additional \$1M over the 2 year project. Tools like the annual report, the bumper stickers, and the social media campaign also increased sales.

4. 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?

We tried to expand the customer base by reaching new age groups. In the past we have relied heavily on print media, but this year added a digital component. Coupled with the improved website, this seems to have been effective in reaching a younger demographic. (A mixed approach is clearly still indicated, as we seem to have two distinct demographics: twenty-somethings, and a large contingent over 55.)

We also used information gleaned in Y1 of this project to inform other outreach efforts this year, including a postcard mailing to SNAP shoppers. Although that mailing was not directly related to Snapshot Week, the approach we used was based upon the data we collected through this project in Y1. The postcard mailing, undertaken with SNAP-Ed and the Maine Department of Health and Human Services, proved very effective at reaching new ethnic groups (particularly recent immigrants in the Augusta area), low-income shoppers, families with young children, and senior citizens (a group we typically struggle to reach).

5. Discuss your community partnerships.

- i. Who are your community partners? The farmers' market managers and volunteers were the primary community partners for Snapshot Week. Other partners vary from community to community, but include soil and water conservation districts, chambers of commerce, and SNAP-Ed nutrition educators.
- ii. How have they contributed to the results you've already achieved? The local markets coordinated the August Snapshot Week festivities, using the tools we provided. They also promoted the event, and Ntl. FM Week, via their local and social media outlets. In many cases, the farmers' markets and their partners also helped collect the shopper and vendor surveys. Markets also collected photos and photo releases, which meant that we were able to collect photos from a broader geographic area than we could have covered with staff alone, and the report is therefore more representative of the markets and the broader agricultural landscape.
- iii. How will they contribute to future results? In the short term, we'll be relying on many of the same partners to distribute the 2017 Maine Farmers' Market Report. We want to get them into the hands of not just our partners, but their partners and constituents. In the long term, we expect that the success of this project over these 2 years has demonstrated 1) The value of a statewide farmers' market celebration and promotion and 2) The value of data collection. Without an FMPP grant to fund the project in 2017, partners will become even more important to keep up the momentum promoting local foods, and to continue the work of data collection.

6. Are you using contractors to conduct the work? If so, how has their work contributed to the results achieved thus far?

Yes, contractors have continued to remain key to this project. The design firm was the most important contractor, as they helped us to improve our messaging and materials. Though they were working specifically on Snapshot Week, they provided invaluable feedback about other aspects of our messaging in the process. For example, they suggested the tagline, "Nourishing the roots of our communities," which we adopted immediately across all our materials. Something as simple as adding that tagline has impacted our work in the sense that it helps contribute to the sense of community and mission that we were hoping to achieve through this project. The farmers and food producers we work with all work very hard to make their farmers' markets community spaces, and the new tagline acknowledges that work, and has been very well received.

The design firm also designed more materials for the Snapshot Week toolkits, including bumper stickers and the survey cards. Having these items professionally designed resulted in very attractive, high-quality materials, which increased the impact of the campaign and surely left participants with a positive impression of the professionalism of Maine's farmers' markets. Materials like the bumper

stickers will have a lasting impact, as they continue to circulate and spread the message. The design firm also designed the annual report, which is currently in production.

7. Have you publicized any results yet? Yes, though the 2017 report is still in production.
- i. **If yes, how did you publicize the results?** We publicized the event, Snapshot Week, via press releases, social media, newsletters, and through our partners (including farmers' markets and the Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry).

The "results" of Snapshot Week are in the form of photos, and survey data (quantitative and qualitative) from vendors and consumers, and quantitative data. Thus far we have primarily shared these results on social media, on our website, and in our newsletter. The photos, data, and comments from participants are a trove of material that we have been using steadily since Snapshot week, and will continue to use for the year to come.

The annual report and MFFM's convention are the other primary venues for publicizing the results. The report will be distributed at the Maine Agricultural Trades Show in January (a free, public event hosted by the Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry, attended by 5-6000 people annually), at the convention, and via partners.

- ii. **To whom did you publicize the results?** We publicized information about the markets and about Snapshot Week all summer, in as many ways as possible. Thus far we've shared photos from the event with the general public, and have shared data from the event with partners, including markets, the Dept. of Ag, and others. Once the report is published, the results will be more widely shared, including through media coverage, MFFM's website, and the report itself. In Year 1 of the project, we also shared the results with other farmers' market organizations, and will look for opportunities to do so again, as the project concludes its second year.
- iii. **How many stakeholders (i.e. people, entities) did you reach?** In Y1, we estimated that we reached 6000 people with information about the data we collected, specifically through the annual report (what we're referring to here as "results"). We expect to reach at least that many with this year's results, by the time the 2017 reports are distributed and we've reported out on the work at the convention. Additionally, this winter we will be attending market winter planning meetings around the state to discuss the demographic data collected over the 2-year project. We hope that these meetings with market groups will help equip them to interpret the data, and to commit to continuing the process in 2018.

8. Have you collected any feedback thus far about your work?
- i. **If so, how did you collect the information?** Because a large part of our project consisted of conducting surveys, we didn't do a formal survey of participants about the project, but did solicit informal feedback.
 - ii. **What feedback have you collected thus far (specific comments)?**

"Snapshot Week was great for our local market. Advertising in the local paper and radio helped to bring more families out. We had plenty of activities planned for kids. They loved the coloring pages, the stickers, the taste testing, and we even had a live reef tank provided by one of our vendors!. Customers

were more than helpful with filling out surveys for us and loved our raffle items. It was enjoyed by many, a very successful day, despite many other activities in the local area competing for customers.”

“Snapshot week helped promote National Farmers' Market Week. Both of these events helped us promote our market by using prepared memes prepared by MFFM and the USDA. The kids really liked the temporary tattoos. I had one young boy come back at least two more times during the season asking for more tattoos and his mom shared some photos with his tattoo on our Facebook page. I am also interested in the Annual Report that was compiled from data collected during this week and the season. It will be interesting to see how Maine’s farmers' markets did this past season.”

“I am a vegetable farmer involved in managing two farmers' markets in Maine. Participating in Snapshot Week helped my markets rally around market promotion and celebration at the time in the season when our vendors need lots of customers to come out and purchase the peak abundance of locally-grown food. The data gleaned from Snapshot Week surveys has also helped my markets better understand what our customers are looking for at the market and how we can grow our base of market farmers and customers.”

9. Budget Summary:

- i. Were there revisions to the budget during the reporting period? (As a reminder, budget changes that are substantive (e.g. changes in line items or amounts that exceed 20% of the original request) must be submitted via separate documentation by contacting LFPP staff. Changes indicated below are not approved until you have obtained prior approval.) Executing the project took significantly more staff time than anticipated.
 - a. If so, briefly describe the reasoning if the budget line item changed by more than 20%: Staff costs from 1/1/2017-9/30/2017 were over \$8000 for primary personnel. We therefore are requesting a 25% increase amounting to \$1560.
 - b. Provide the date that LFPP staff provided prior approval for the revisions of a budget line item that changed by more than 20%, if applicable: This final report revealed the extra funds were potentially available; will request permission upon submitting this report.
- ii. Total amount spent during reporting period:

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|----------------------|----------------|
| Personnel: | \$5460 |
| Contractual: | \$29016 |
| Equipment Purchases: | \$0 |
| Travel: | \$1048 |
| Supplies: | \$5238 |
| Other: | \$2502 |
| Indirect Costs: | \$3344 |
| TOTAL: | \$46608 |

- iii. Amount of matching funds/in-kind contributions used during the reporting period: None
- iv. Did the project generate any income? No
 - a. If yes, how much was generated and how was it used?

10. Summarize unexpected delays or problems (if applicable).

- i. State the issue(s) and the reasoning behind its/their occurrence:

MFFM has 2 fulltime staff, and two part-time staff who together work 0.50 FTE (i.e. fewer than 20 hours/week between the two of them). There were unexpected staff changes and absences due to illness during the key summer months that impacted our capacity.

ii. How did the issues affect timelines?

Being somewhat short-staffed did not affect the overall project timelines (largely thanks to working with excellent contractors), but did impact the amount of one-on-one support we were able to give. (We were still in the field almost as much as anticipated, but had less coverage at the office, and slightly less messaging going out in advance.)

iii. How did the issues affect the measurable results?

The primary outcome seems to be a slightly smaller than anticipated number of surveys returned. We collected 1406 shopper intercept surveys, and 224 farmer/vendor surveys. For the former, weather may have been a factor (it rained on the Saturday of Snapshot Week, which was the day the most markets were participating). The farmer/vendor surveys in particular require "haranguing", so the somewhat limited staff capacity at the time likely was a factor.

iv. How did the issues affect the budget?

This had no effect on the budget.

v. How did your organization resolve the issue(s)?

We paid particular attention to collecting every survey possible from the markets, lest any market managers or volunteers forget to send them to us to be tallied.

11. What grant activities/impacts do you hope to accomplish in the next six months? In other words, what do you plan to include in your next report to FMPP staff (interim or final)?

This is our final report, but we still plan to achieve impacts from this project in the next 6 months. The most significant impact will be from the 2017 Maine Farmers' Market Annual Report. This year it will be on hand on time to distribute at all our winter events, including the Maine Agricultural Trades Show. Winter is an excellent time to promote this type of project, since there are many events/conferences, plus there are still 30+ farmers' markets taking place. Releasing elements of the report will provide MFFM an opportunity to generate news and attention for the markets over the winter months!

We also plan to conduct further data analysis, comparing last year's survey results with this year's, and providing data to individual markets that collected a sufficient number of surveys to provide real feedback. For many of them, this will be their second year participating, which means they can start to see longitudinal patterns emerging from their data.

MFFM appreciates the incredible opportunities this grant provided! It is challenging to promote farmers' markets in a state with a low population density, and takes more work to generate results. The funding for this multi-pronged promotional campaign had a significant impact on Maine farmers and farmers' markets.