

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

Report Date Range:	October 1, 2016 – September 29, 2017
Authorized Representative Name:	James R. Riddle
Authorized Representative Phone:	865-803-0282
Authorized Representative Email:	FalconJRR@earthlink.net
Recipient Organization Name:	Seven Springs Farm to Table LLC
Project Title as Stated on Grant Agreement:	Cultivating Local Agriculture: A Project to Expand Access to Locally Produced Products
Grant Agreement Number:	15FMPP-TN-0061
Year Grant was Awarded:	2015
Project City/State:	Maynardville/Tennessee
Total Awarded Budget:	\$73,975.00

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: _____

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: Market the On-Farm Retail Facility to increase farmer participation and consumer access to and consumption of locally produced fresh food.

a. Progress Made: A modern, interactive and comprehensive web site has been developed using WordPress (<http://sevenspringsfarmtn.com/>). A Facebook page has been developed (<https://www.facebook.com/SevenSpringsFarm/>) with currently 1,527 likes and a Five Star rating. Blogs and posts are being published weekly. Multiple local news articles and stories have been published on the Farm Store and Farmer’s Market efforts. A partnered flexible CSA has been established with 40 members participating. Tourist oriented directional signs have been installed and folks are finding it easier to find the Farm Store. Listings have been garnered in multiple local references and the Pick Tennessee App.

b. Impact on Community: This project has increased domestic consumption of, and access to, locally and regionally produced agricultural products through development of an expanded producer-to-consumer market opportunity, market outreach to both producers and consumers and development of a consumer and producer network. Having an on farm retail capability within 20 minutes of a major metropolitan area offers great benefit for local agricultural producers and consumers. On-farm sales

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through the retail facility with regular hours and dependable inventory have increased the customer base for locally produced fresh food. We now market products from 13 local farmers including milk and butter from a family farm in Crossville, Tennessee. We continue to increase sales and our customer base.

- ii. Goal/Objective 2: Obtain special purpose equipment to enable longer term storage and shelf life extension along with Farm Store Display of locally produced farm products.
 - a. Progress Made: All equipment has been procured, installed and is in use.



Display freezer with local beef, pork, and cornmeal. Display Cooler with fresh produce, local eggs, local cheese, and local grape juices.

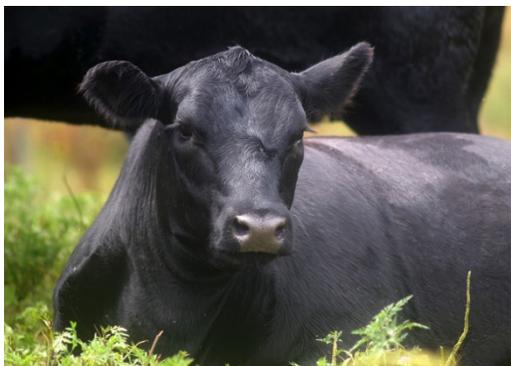


Local Farm Store with front porch appeal.

Walk-in Cooler and Freezer.



Farm direct milk from Sunrise Dairy in Crossville Tennessee featured at the farm store. The Farm Crew.



Angus beef fed grain on grass; all natural in a natural environment. Bounty of the garden providing community access to fresh wholesome fruits and vegetables.

- b. Impact on Community: This grant has allowed us to capture animal production peaks and maintain meat product inventory. By installing a walk-in freezer to increase storage capability for retail cuts of beef and pork we have been able to store adequate product inventory to meet sales demand and manage seasonal production peaks. This has allowed us to manage fluctuations in animal availability and allow animal harvest at optimal finish. It has also allowed us to cut costs by processing more animals at one time saving time and money by cutting transportation costs. Increased refrigerated storage capability has extended the saleable shelf life of fresh fruits and vegetables offered for sale and decreased waste. Modern glass front freezers and coolers have allowed for product display to enhance customer appeal, product visibility and have increased sales.
- iii. Goal/Objective 3: Hire an on-farm retail market manager to develop new market opportunities by expanding market hours and expanding the market season into the fall and winter; develop a weekly evening market, utilize local talent to provide entertainment, canning and cooking demonstrations.

 - a. Progress Made: A farm store retail market manager has been hired, store hours extended and our first Farm-To-Table community lunch was accomplished opening day of the counties farmers market. We host farm to table experiences at the farm and provide meat, fruit and vegetables to many of Knoxville's Food Trucks and restaurants.
 - b. Impact on Community: This project has allowed us to hire a dedicated full time market manager to expanded producer-to-consumer market opportunity, market outreach to both producers and consumers and develop a consumer and producer network. Having an on farm retail capability within 20 minutes of a major metropolitan area has been a great benefit for local agricultural producers and consumers. The market manager runs on-farm sales through a retail facility with regular hours and dependable inventory and has increased the customer base for locally produced fresh food. We have several young and old farmers that we now market for including dairy, pork, free range eggs, local Maple Syrup, Ice Cream, Honey and other products.
- iv. Goal/Objective 4: Develop on-line presence for the market through social media including Constant Contact, Facebook, Pintrest, etc.

 - a. Progress Made: All accounts have been established and are being used. Almost 80 percent of Americans use the Internet and over half of all adults use now use Social Media. Social Media outreach and marketing is the way of the future and this project

has allow adequate resources to be devoted to developing a sustainable and ongoing Social Media Marketing and Outreach effort.

b. Impact on Community: Our social media marketing campaign has built awareness of the newly established on-farm retail facility for both producers and consumers. This has increased the number of visitors to the on-farm market, increased sales and increased demand for locally produced fruits and vegetables, meat, milk, cheeses, etc.

- v. Goal/Objective 5: Develop key marketing messages, eye catching graphics, public relations, collateral materials, partnerships, and advertising.
- a. Progress Made: Key marketing messages, eye catching graphics, public relations, collateral materials, partnerships, and advertising have and are being accomplished. Key advertising media have been utilized to "kick-start" a continuous and sustainable social media marketing effort. Social Media marketing is the way of the future and this project has allowed adequate resources to be devoted to Social Media Marketing.
- b. Impact on Community: Our marketing campaign has built awareness of the newly established on-farm retail facility for both producers and consumers. This has increased the number of visitors to the on-farm market, increased sales and increased demand for locally produced fruits and vegetables, meat, milk, cheeses, etc.

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: Two garden workers and one in-store manager and a contract marketing professional.
- ii. Number of jobs retained: Five garden and market workers; seven new and beginning farmers.
- iii. Number of indirect jobs created: Three indirect jobs supported.
- iv. Number of markets expanded: Two; on farm and CSA.
- v. Number of new markets established: Two; on farm and CSA.
- vi. Market sales have increased by \$47,826.97 and increased by 225%.
- vii. Number of farmers/producers that have benefited from the project: Seven new and beginning farmers; six existing farmers.
 - a. Percent Increase: 500%

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; by having the on farm store we are able to attract local residents and have markedly increased use of SNAP among lower income populations. A market promotion using WIC this summer was a huge success.

4. Discuss your community partnerships. Local farms, County Farmer's Market, County Extension Agent, and others have partnered to make this a successful project.

- i. Who are your community partners? Seven Springs Farm to Table – All Naturally Grown, is the host farm; we are working with Lacewing Farm – 100% Naturally Grown Produce; Right by Nature Farm – 100% Naturally Grown Produce; and Crooked Road Farm – USDA Certified Organic Produce. Other partners include Burns Bees, Shelton Farms, Sweetwater Valley Cheese, Post Vineyards, Sunrise Dairy, Bill Loy Farms, Harold Savage, Jerry Helton Farms and Happy Hollow Farm.
- ii. How have they contributed to the results of the FMPP Project? By providing increased selection and increased variety of products, the Farm Store and CSA have become more attractive. Partnering in a community CSA, which is a flexible offering with products

selected on-line weekly, has been very successful. Marketing local produce and value added products in the Farm Store is attractive to local partners and the community.

iii. How will they continue to contribute to your project's future activities, beyond the performance period of this FMPP grant? Continued participation will enhance continued market expansion and product sales. We hope to really grow the CSA and offer a winter market and off season CSA in time. We would like to have an on farm commercial kitchen to produced value added products partnering with local growers to utilize peak production surplus and less than perfect produce.

5. Are you using contractors to conduct the work? If so, how did their work contributed to the results of the FMPP project? Yes; the web design and marketing are done through contract. This effort has been invaluable in making everything come together for this project as they offer expertize and marketing experience critical in today's digital world.

6. Have you publicized any results yet? Yes.

i. If yes, how did you publicize the results? We have had several news articles, blog posts and marketing E-Mails. We also presented at a UT Center for Profitable Agriculture Workshop, hosted Extension Agents, hosted a national Agriability meeting Field Trip and several school groups.

ii. To whom did you publicize the results? Local farmers, community and the general public.

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

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? Trip Advisor Reviews, Facebook Reviews and individual input.

ii. What feedback was relayed (specific comments)? We have a perfect 5.0 of 5 stars on Facebook with 28 reviews.

"The Riddles are an Incredible family who are bringing fresh produce and more to our area. This is the place to stop in for veges, fruit, meats, cheeses, and gifts. I just tried the balsamic vinegar new to the store- excellent!"

"The vegetables are absolutely amazing! He is definitely good at what he does. Prices are good and he has a good selection. Stop in and get your local vegetables here."

"They offer fresh meats, vegetables, cheeses, and everything is raised, grown on the farm."

"Traveled to find out info on their new CSA and ended up getting an amazing farm tour for my homeschooled boys! This is an A1 top notch family run establishment. We are Seven Springs believers!"

"Bought 3 pounds of ground beef from you all at the Market Square farmer's market this week- it's excellent! I couldn't be happier with the quality or the price! Thanks! I'll be coming back for more."

"So glad Union County Farmers Market opening today! Seven Springs vegetables and beef are fabulous all summer long."

"We picked blueberries today and there were a lot of varieties and I love that they do not use chemicals on them. Their store is beautiful and they carry a lot of local products. We will be visiting often!"

"Fabulous produce, meats and much more! I love these people!"

"Awesome people, amazing produce! The customer service is also outstanding!"

“Last Thursday I bought 2 huge Sirloin Steaks at the New Harvest Farmers Market from Seven Springs and they were absolutely AMAZING!!! EXTREMELY tender and GREAT flavor!! Definitely worth it!!! Thank you Seven Springs!!!”

“Highly recommend all my friends and family to go by and check this place out.”

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
 - a. If yes, how much was generated and how was it used to further the objectives of the award? \$47,826.97; income was reinvested in personnel and equipment to expand operations; some income was used for additional marketing.

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). I wish we had purchased larger refrigeration and freezer capacity; did not anticipate the growth in demand. We are expanding our small cattle operation to meet demand for local beef.
- ii. If goals or outcome measures were not achieved, identify and share the lessons learned to help others expedite problem-solving: Goals and outcomes were exceeded.
- 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 FMPP Staff are outstanding to work with and answered all questions promptly. A great experience. Thanks USDA for helping us succeed and save a Family Farm!

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.

We continue to expand our customer base and increase the number of farm partners. We expanded the acreage we have under cultivation and will add another high tunnel for season extension.

We applied for a grant under USDA's Local Food Promotion Program (LFPP) to establish a small scale fresh tomato processing facility to produce fresh and preserved tomato salsa, with Seven Springs Farm to Table LLC functioning as an intermediary for distribution and sale through our local and regional food supply chain to meet market demand. Consumer access for the fresh and preserved tomato salsa will be facilitated in partnership with four local direct marketing farms having a combined presence in 12 local Farmers Markets and each providing Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) options serving close to 500 consumers. The capacity building from the FMPP grant was critical to enabling us to make this new grant application. If successful, we hope to retain and create several additional jobs with the new initiative.

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?

Communities need continuous access to locally produced fresh food and value added products and our producers need a direct producer to consumer venue for their local agricultural products; other than a seasonal once-a-week farmers market, there is no opportunity for small farmers to direct market products to consumers. I would like to see continued resources available for small farmers and Family Farms to develop direct producer to consumer market opportunities.