

**Local Food Promotion Program (LFPP)
Final Performance Report**

The final performance report summarizes the outcome of your LFPP award objectives. As stated in the LFPP Terms and Conditions, you will not be eligible for future LFPP or Farmers Market 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 LFPP 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 your assigned grant specialist to avoid delays:

LFPP Phone: 202-720-2731; Email: USDALFPPQuestions@ams.usda.gov; Fax: 202-720-0300

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

Report Date Range: <i>(e.g. September 30, 20XX-September 29, 20XX)</i>	October 1, 2015 – September 30, 2016
Authorized Representative Name:	Stacey Jensen
Authorized Representative Phone:	928-613-1588
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Recipient Organization Name:	North Leupp Family Farms, Inc.
Project Title as Stated on Grant Agreement:	West Navajo Nation Community Food Promotion Program
Grant Agreement Number: <i>(e.g. 14-LFPPX-XX-XXXX)</i>	15LFPPAZ0048
Year Grant was Awarded:	2016
Project City/State:	Leupp, Arizona
Total Awarded Budget:	\$24,986

LFPP 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 LFPP 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:** *Increase the domestic production and consumption of locally grown food by providing public education/outreach, as well as facilitating the access and increasing the affordability of traditional and fresh local produce.*

a. Progress Made:

On January 16 2016, a kick-off meeting was held at the NLFF with the Board Directors and family farmers. In the kick-off meeting, the NLFF farmers were engaged to identify and prioritize the local food needs in Navajo Nation. Factors such as harsh weather conditions, soil depletion, weeds control, and animal/pest control greatly limited the current food production at NLFF.

On April 1 2016, a whole-day Strategic Planning Meeting/Workshop with both local food producers and food providers/consumers was held at the NLFF for the project team to further understand the community expectations and the opportunities that small producers may have. A total of 25 people attended the meeting, including NLFF farmers and their families, NLFF Board of Directors, AATech staff, and the representatives from the STAR School. The meeting reviewed the goals and objectives and the ways to increase the access and consumption of traditional foods. The family farmers discussed the plans for the upcoming growing season and signed up for their plots. The President of NLFF, Mr. Stacey Jensen presented the progress made in the farm during the past last season and demonstrated the use of organic soil amendments. Mr. Jensen also showed the family farmers how to grow traditional heirloom crops and adapted crop varieties using native seeds. Small quantity of seeds samples were distributed to the farmers to try out.

Mr. Bob Sotomayor, AATech’s Farming Consultant, interviewed NLFF’s Board of Directors and the family farmers, gathered valuable information, and later on made specific recommendations on how to increase food production at NLFF in his trip report, which was made available to the members of NLFF. Farm-grown fresh vegetable, e.g. blue corn, squash, was used for cooking demonstration. Navajo culture and tradition were taught by elders. Navajo County Board of Supervisor, Mr. Jesse Thompson, attended the event and gave a speech on the importance of local food and rural business development. The last part of the meeting was also dedicated to questions and discussions related to the food needs in Navajo Nation, the strategic approach for the farm to bridge the gap making more locally grown food available for the community.

Continued discussion among key project members and local stakeholders after the strategic planning meeting allowed the project team to conduct a feasibility study based on true local conditions. An implementation plan was also developed according to the study results.

b. Impact on Community:

The program improved the communication and mutual understanding among local food producers and providers/consumers in West Navajo. Community members

learned the skills and techniques to better take care of their land and eventually produce more food for the community.

- ii. **Goal/Objective 2:** *Develop new market opportunities for local producers to serve local food markets and improve food security in the low income communities.*

a. Progress Made:

Developing new market opportunities is about increasing the supply of fresh local food. In this case, the program is focused on expanding NLFF's capacity not only to produce but to aggregate, store, distribute, and market fresh produce. The project team explored the feasibility of developing a food business enterprise that serves as a intermediate between regional farms and the residents in West Navajo. A comprehensive feasibility study was completed to evaluate the economic, market, technical, financial, and management feasibilities. Equipment and infrastructure needs were identified. A business implementation plan was also developed.

b. Impact on Community:

Through the strategic planning at the community level and the on-going discussions around local food, NLFF Board has much clearer vision on the role they are playing and will continue to play to advance the local food system in Navajo Nation. The feasibility study and the business implementation plan provided NLFF a roadmap to its future success as a local food business enterprise focusing on food aggregation and distribution in conjunction with food production.

- iii. **Goal/Objective 3:** *Stimulate economic development by creating most needed jobs and new business opportunities in the West Navajo Agency.*

a. Progress Made:

Although the current grant is for a planning grant, the feasibility study has projected the positive impacts of the proposed food business enterprise on the economic development of the region. It is expected that the proposed business operation will create both new jobs and business opportunities, which are extremely critical to low-income and low- access areas like Navajo Nation. The business operation will certainly bring more income to local food producers.

b. Impact on Community:

The proposed business enterprise expects to create 4-5 direct jobs during and after the implementation of the business operation. We also anticipate to create more indirect jobs as the business enterprise stimulates the regional economic development.

- iv. **Goal/Objective 4:** *Improve the economic viability of local food producers by providing training, technical assistance in food safety/certification, and value added processing.*

a. Progress Made:

The project team (AATech and U of A) provided training and technical assistance were tailored according to the needs indentified in the kick-off meeting.

During the April 2016 meeting, AATech's farming consultant, Bob Sotomayor, visited NLFF, collected first-hand field data and provided recommendations on how to improve farm productivity. The assessment report was made available to local farmers.

Food safety including Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) and Good Handling Practices (GHP) is critical to the success of any food business. On August 27th 2016, NLFF President, Stacey Jensen, attended the Food Safety Workshop at San Xavier Cooperative Farm (SXCF) in Tucson, Arizona.

b. Impact on Community:

NLFF is in the process of getting GAP and GHP certifications, which will allow NLFF to sell its farm products and to process “raw food” into value-added products in the STAR School’s extended kitchen facility.

- v. **Goal/Objective 5:** *Preserve Navajo identity, tradition, and culture through education and promotion of farming and traditional food consumption.*

a. Progress Made:

Navajo culture and tradition were taught in the strategic meeting/workshop by elders. Traditional ways of cooking were demonstrated and promoted.

The feasibility study and the business implementation plan specifically addressed the cultural uniqueness of the proposed food business enterprise that is owned and operated by Navajo people.

For example, some activities discussed in the implementation plan are:

- Produce a marketing/educational brochure to help local food producers introduce traditional foods at farmers’ markets and/or community outreach events. This plan includes enlisting the help of a nutritionist from the Health Clinic and Diabetes Program who is familiar with traditional foods.
- Establish a farmers’ market (“Sunrise Market”) at the NLFF site that will demonstrate traditional food preparation and involve traditional food vendors.
- NLFF will continue to invite local school student to the farm and teach Navajo youth the traditional ways of farming. Classes or workshops will be held on a regular basis.

b. Impact on Community:

“Children are our greatest treasure. They are our future.”- Nelson Mandela. Our youth are the ones who will carry Navajo identity and tradition to the future.

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, 20__). Include further explanation if necessary.**

- i. **Number of direct jobs created:** N/A. No new jobs will be created until the program is implemented. The feasibility study showed that 4-5 jobs will be created.
- ii. **Number of jobs retained:** N/A.
- iii. **Number of indirect jobs created:** N/A. No indirect jobs will be created until the project is implemented. The farmers market this season will potentially create 1-2 temporary jobs. Partnering with STAR School to establish a food hub could potentially create additional jobs.
- iv. **Number of markets expanded:** N/A. NLFF does not have winter production and product volume will not be increased until the summer season begins.

- v. **Number of new markets established:** N/A. The goal of this project is to look at the feasibility of establishing new markets.
- vi. **Market sales increased by:** N/A (Not applicable for this project).
- vii. **Number of farmers/producers that have benefitted from the project:** 30 NLFF farmers and their families.

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?

N/A The feasibility study indicated that NLFF would potentially triple the customer base in Leupp and the surrounding Chapters by reaching new populations in these LI/LA areas. NLFF strives to make fresh local/regional food readily available to more indigenous people on the reservation.

4. Discuss your community partnerships.

i. Who are your community partners?

NLFF has developed long term partnership with Painted Desert Demonstration Projects, Inc. (PDDP), later known as the STAR School. The STAR School is located 25 miles east of Flagstaff, Arizona, next to the Southwest corner of Navajo Nation. The school serves students from preschool through 8th grade, who live primarily in large rural areas of Leupp, Tolani Lake, and Flagstaff. The school currently has 130 students, comprised entirely of Native Americans. The school serves a low-income area with 82% of the students participating in the free or reduced price meals program offered by USDA.

ii. How have they contributed to the overall results of the LFPP project?

Over the years, the STAR School has been promoting food security and sustainable agricultural practices among Native Americans by incorporating farming and food related education in the school's curriculums.

Through the school programs, NLFF was able to promote local food, sustainable farming, and Navajo traditions among Navajo youth and their families. In the past, the STAR School has purchased fresh produce from the Farm to support school events.

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

In the future, after obtaining the food safety certificates, NLFF hopes to participate in the STAR School's "Farm to School" program and supply the school lunch program with fresh produce from local/regional farms.

In addition, NLFF is prepared to expand its relationship with the STAR School to jointly develop an on-going education program around local food. For example, summer internships or vocational programs will be offered for students to learn about traditional and contemporary agricultural methods. This is especially important to help sustain Navajo culture and tradition.

On the other hand, by working with the STAR School and other community partners, NLFF's new food business enterprise will help strengthen the connection between the school and neighboring Navajo farms which is essential to the development of a robust local food system.

5. Did you use contractors to conduct the work? If so, how did their work contribute to the results of the LFPP project?

Apex Applied Technology, Inc. (AATech) was retained to assist NLFF with program management, feasibility study, and business planning:

- As a lead consultant, AATech studied and evaluated the viability and identified the needs and challenges of developing a food business that will aggregate, store, market/distribute local/regional fresh produce in a way that is culturally appropriate to the Navajo Nation. The study assessed economic, market, technical, financial, and management feasibilities of the proposed business operation. AATech also developed the business implementation plan based on the results and recommendations from the feasibility study.
- AATech staff provided technical assistance and training to the local farmers.
- AATech assisted NLFF with the program management, prepared all the reports and pay requests on behalf of NLFF.

6. Have you publicized any results yet?*

NLFF has not published any results in any journal or conference. However, the feasibility study report and the business implementation plan were finalized and provided to USDA. The reports have also been made available to NLFF and its members.

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

i. If so, how did you collect the information?

Feedback was constantly collected during the course of the project. In addition, AATech prepared an extensive questionnaire which was handed out in the Strategic Planning Meeting/Workshop on April 1, 2016 to facilitate the discussion.

ii. What feedback was relayed (specific comments)?

Most of the feedback was related to the challenges that NLFF farmers are facing. The challenges include harsh weather conditions, soil depletion, weeds control, and animal/pest control, etc. The adverse conditions contributed to low productivity at the farm. Because Native American farmers are strongly against the use chemical fertilizer, herbicides, and pesticides on their land, it is even more difficult to produce large quantity of food to meet the community demand.

The stakeholder's feedback also confirmed that the Navajo communities have a huge demand of fresh produce. The entire West Navajo Nation is in "food desert", where fresh food is hard to find. Therefore, developing a food business enterprise focusing on aggregation, storage, and distribution of food products from other local/regional farms to meet the local food demand offers an effective solution to solve the food issues in Navajo Nation.

8. Budget Summary:

- i. As part of the LFPP 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**
- ii. Did the project generate any income?
 - a. If yes, how much was generated and how was it used to further the objectives of the award?
No.

9. Lessons Learned:

- i. **Summarize any lessons learned. Draw from 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).**

It does not appear that there is much interest in crops other than those are categorized as “traditional”, nor does there appear to be willingness to make attempts to grow the “conventional” vegetable, except in the greenhouses. Beans and peas have been grown as cover/nitrifying crops but the beans are NOT eaten by local people, simply because the growers are not bean eaters. County agriculture extension or livestock does not appear to be the focus of these growers.

Some income is generated as a result of blue corn sales to STAR School. The net income is used to buy equipment parts and other supplies needed. Serious pest problems are gophers, crows, small squirrels, and elk.

Weather problems are mostly due to late frosts; severe wind and low humidity; sparse rain and snow fall; and cold spring soil. Squash bugs and corn smut are problematic. Mr. Jensen is aware of various pesticide options which allow growers to remain “chemical free”.

People live on the reservation are facing a health crisis with high rate of nutrition related illness. A quick and effective solution must be developed to solve this serious issue. Therefore, the study recommended a food business operation that focuses on aggregation, storage, and distribution in conjunction with food production. NLFF will continue working on increasing the food production on the farm. Meanwhile, it will develop the food business enterprise to bring in more fresh food from other local and regional farms and make them available to the Navajo communities.

Based on the available data, the feasibility study concluded that the business operation is economically self-sustainable. NLFF is on the right track of developing a successful local food business in West Navajo Nation and Northern Arizona.

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

The goals and objectives of this planning grant were essentially met. The feasibility study and the business implementation plan were completed. NLFF is looking forward to implementing the plan and eventually bringing a viable solution to the food challenges on the Navajo Reservation.

- 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:**

It would be very difficult to manage the grant project while managing the day-to-day activities at the Farm. Using a professional consultant made the grant management much

easier and smoother. AATech handled all the administrative tasks allowing NLFF staff primarily focusing on the core efforts of the project. AATech staff also provided their unparalleled expertise guiding us through each step of the project. It has been a great experience.

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.**

Promoting local food and sustainable agriculture is NLFF's mission and vision. All the outreach and educational activities will be continued.

In addition, the current grant is a planning grant. NLFF will look for ways to implementing the proposed food business operation. NLFF has submitted an application for 2017 LFPP Implementation Grant to develop the facility and infrastructure required for the proposed business operation.

- 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?**

Future activities related to farm improvement are:

- Explore EQIP and other funding tribal sources.
- Development of a more productive well or an additional well.
- Elk-proof fencing is strong recommended.
- Opting for use of man-made plant fertilizers, such as the use of 0-45-0 (a mined fertilizer), urea, ammonia sulfate, 11-52-0 (ammonia phosphate).
- Turning to legume cover crops (peas, vegetables, beans, and clover) for nitrification of unused or fallow plots.
- Use of rotation system and sawmill wastes for organic matter in addition to acquisition of more manure.
- Cease burning of crop residues!
- Purchase the following equipment:
 - 3-shank ripper
 - Chisel plow (6 shank)
 - Border disk
 - 3 point rototiller
 - 50 horsepower tractor with 4-wheel drive
- Generate compost with mill waste and manure to incorporate to the plots.
- Establish test plots using 0-45-0, control plot comparisons, track yields closely, public results. Do the same with pea, vegetables, rye, and bean plots. This effort would be to convince families to follow their assigned plot with cover crops while farming a rotational-use plot (2 years) then returning to original plot.
- With an elk-proof fence, stone and pome fruit trees are a viably possibility on "unassigned" land close to water tank. Trees could be drip-line irrigated ala "vineyard" style (this is a 10-15 years project scope).

Future activities related to advance the proposed food business are:

- Aggregate fresh produce from regional farms to meet the demand of fruits and vegetables among the community;
- Obtain a portable cold storage to store aggregated farm products;
- Expand NLFF's "Sunrise Market";
- Establish a mobile market including a refrigerated trailer and a pickup truck; and
- Work towards the development of a regional food hub at Leupp in collaboration with the STAR School and other local stakeholders.

---The End of the Report---



Thank
You