

**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 29, 2017
Authorized Representative Name:	Robbi Mixon
Authorized Representative Phone:	907-299-7540
Authorized Representative Email:	manager@homerfarmersmarket.org
Recipient Organization Name:	Homer Farmers Market
Project Title as Stated on Grant Agreement:	<i>Homer Farmers Market- Expanding Access and Solidifying Statewide Networks</i>
Grant Agreement Number: <i>(e.g. 14-FMPPX-XX-XXXX)</i>	15-FMPP-AK-106
Year Grant was Awarded:	2015
Project City/State:	Homer, Alaska
Total Awarded Budget:	\$81,345.00

FMPP staff may contact you to follow up for long-term success stories. Who may we contact?

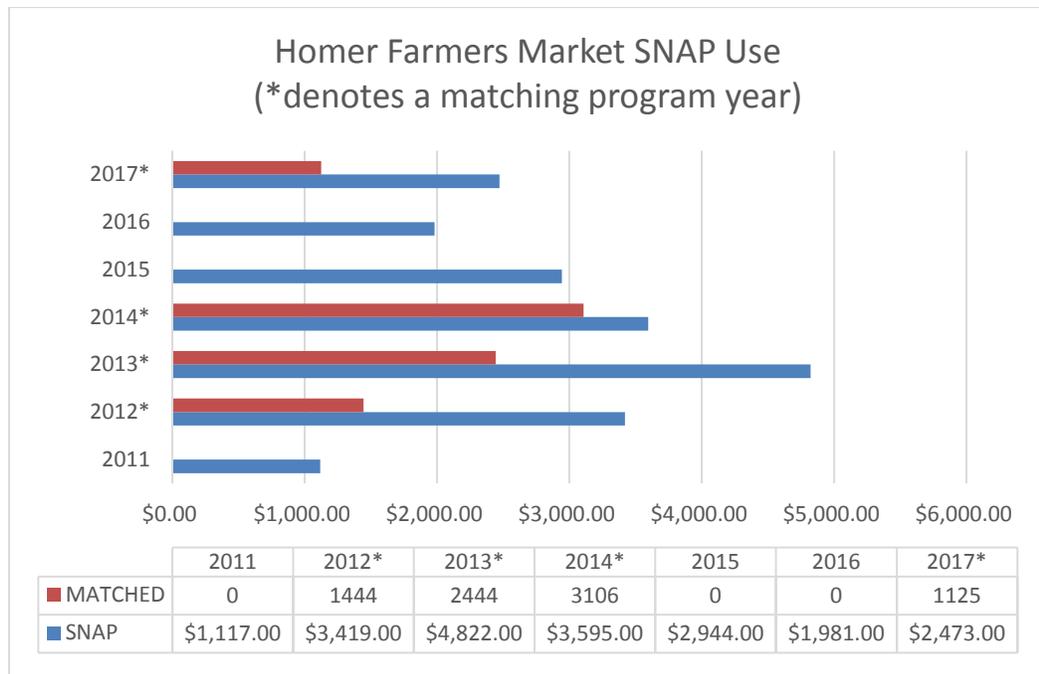
- Same Authorized Representative listed above (check if applicable).
 Different individual: Name: _____; Email: _____; Phone: _____

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

1. State the goals/objectives of your project as outlined in the grant narrative and/or approved by FMPP staff. If the goals/objectives from the narrative have changed from the grant narrative, please highlight those changes (e.g. “new objective”, “new contact”, “new consultant”, etc.). You may add additional goals/objectives if necessary. For each item below, qualitatively discuss the progress made and indicate the impact on the community, if any.

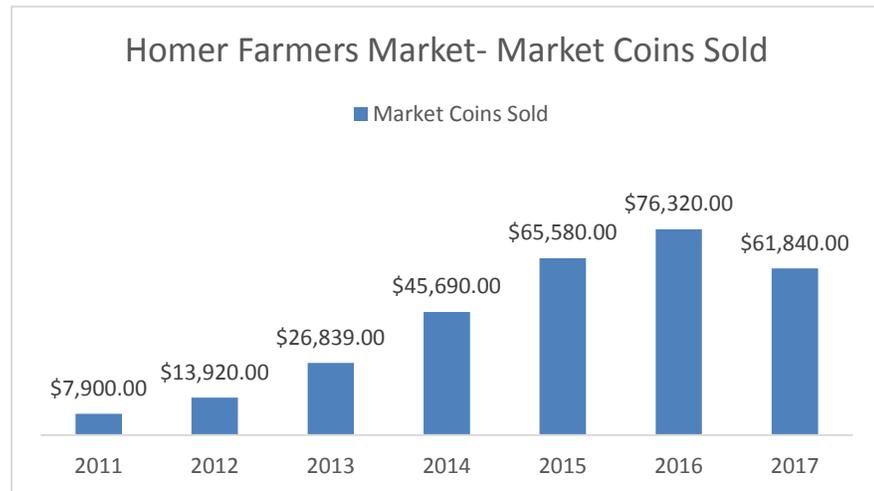
i. **Goal/Objective 1:** Increase access to fresh local foods to surrounding food desert areas and to low income populations by continuing to grow the use of SNAP benefits at the market by 25% each year.

- **Progress Made:** We retained our EBT Coordinator (5th season), and hired back-up EBT Operators for our Wednesday markets and sporadic coverage. They will take over the Coordinator position in 2018. The Homer Farmers Market maintained FNS authorization for the 2017 season. We mentioned in all advertisements (print and radio) that SNAP, Senior Nutrition, and WIC were accepted at the market. A community supported fundraiser netted \$2,500 to fund SNAP Matching at the Market for the 2017 season, in hopes of increasing participation of SNAP redemptions at the market.
- **Impact on Community:** The ability to accept SNAP at the market benefits both vendors, by allowing access to an expanded market, and customers, by increasing access to healthy, local foods. The chart below shows our SNAP use over the last 7 years. We began to see growth this past market season, up 24.8% from 2016. A matching program and increased advertising most likely aided this growth.



ii. **Goal/Objective 2:** Increase produce vendor engagement by providing pre- and post-season training to improve quality and appearance of farmers’ market produce and advertising.

- **Progress Made:** We conducted several Farmers Round Table sessions, as well as hosted two workshops for FamilyFarmed. These events were quite popular and we plan to continue these moving forward.
 - 1/17/16 – Homer Farmers Market Annual Meeting and Season Review (51 attendees)
 - 3/24/16 – Book Club Discussion: “The Lean Farm” (23 attendees)
 - 4/14/16 – Film Night: “A Farmer’s Road” (35 attendees)
 - 12/8/16 – How to Build a Basic Farm Website (15 attendees)
 - 1/28/17 – Homer Farmers Market Annual Meeting and Season Review (46 attendees)
 - 2/16/17 – Book Club Discussion: “The Market Gardener” (8 attendees)
 - 3/4/17 – Alaska Farmers Market Conference, Post Conference Vendor Presentation with Keynote Kathy Zeman (Minnesota Farmers Market Association) – “Best Marketing Practices for Farmers Market Vendors” (23 attendees)
 - 4/7/17 & 4/8/17 – “Growing Success for Small Farms,” presented by Family Farmed, (4/7 – Homer, AK, 27 attendees; 4/8 – Kenai, AK, 22 attendees)
 - **Impact on Community:** Producers gained insight into a variety of topics. Producers learned about streamlining operations and created implementation plans. Many reported their businesses have achieved a more balance and sustainable pace. Semi-regular gatherings of producers created a more solidified agricultural community in the area. Ideas, philosophies, growing practices, and even equipment were shared.
- iii. **Goal/Objective 3:** Increase purchase of local foods by at least 10% through expanded community engagement and education about the Homer Farmers Market.
- **Progress Made:** Market Coins sales are a great indicator of overall market sales from 2015 to 2016, we saw a 16.4% growth in purchases at the Homer Farmers Market. We can attribute this to increased advertising – including advertising in new ways, such as additional radio stations and print outlets. We held 19 Chef at the Market cooking demonstrations to highlight specialty crop preparation. We also continued our Kids Activities, helping bring in families.



We did not see this growth during the 2017 season, with market coin sales down by 19%. We further expanded our advertising, created a new business Facebook page (with 941 followers) and held 16 Chef at the Market cooking demonstrations. One reason for the lack of growth could be the \$2 processing fee for customers to use credit cards at the market. This could have been a deterrent, and customers opted for cash purchases. In 2016, vendors reported an average of 12% of sales coming from market coins, while in 2017, vendors reported an average of 17% of sales coming from market coins.

86% of customers at the Homer Farmers Market report purchasing more local foods, since they began shopping at the market. Moving forward, we are creating a more streamlined approach to income reporting, which will reflect even more accurately our growth, or lack of.

- **Impact on Community:** In 2016, 60% of vendors surveyed report an “increase in demand for my product.” In 2017, 69% reported an increase. More community members, local businesses, and institutions are supporting locally grown food. The market provides growers with stable growth in local food sales and more local food is thus sold throughout the community. This serves to bolster the local economy and increase food security.

iv. **Goal/Objective 4:** Develop and convene a bi-annual Alaska Farmers Market Conference

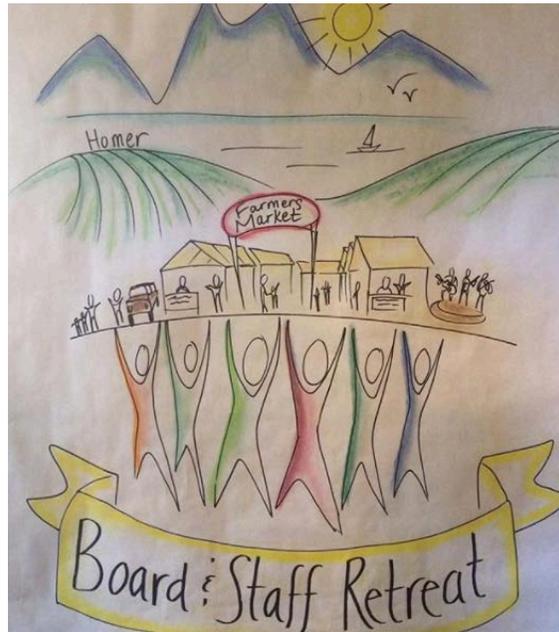
- **Progress Made:** Alaska Farmers Market Organizers Conference was commenced March 2-4, 2017, the first ever event of its kind in the state of Alaska. Delegates from 18 different Farmers Markets (almost half of the state’s markets) were represented, with over 50 participants. Our guest speakers included Kathy Zeman (Director, Minnesota State Farmers Market Association), Will O’Donnell (Director, Washington State Farmers Market Association), and Arthur Keyes (Director, Alaska Division of Agriculture). Many other agencies and organizations were presented and market managers facilitated many sessions. More information [about the conference](#) can be

found here, with [video recordings of the sessions](#) here.



- **Impact on Community:** Every participant gained and shared knowledge, brainstormed ideas, lamented failures, and created statewide connections. At the end of the conference, all participants agreed to form a statewide Alaska Farmers Market Association, to create a more connected Alaskan Farmers Market Community, share resources, problem solve together, and help farmers markets and producers succeed. Our state will have a chance at making the association succeed, thanks to a [2017 FMPP](#) Grant awarded to Cook Inletkeeper to incubate the organization. With the help of the AK Division of Agriculture and the Farmers Market Coalition, we will set goals for uniform, baseline data collection.
- v. **Goal/Objective 5:** Improve management capacity of the Homer Farmers Market staff and Board through increased training and engagement.
- **Progress Made:** Employees and board members participated in the following workshops:
 - 2/4/16 – 2/6/16 – “Washington State Farmers Market Association Conference” (1 staff, 2 board attended)
 - 10/21/16 – “Developing Effective Strategies for Workplace Conflict” (3 employees attended)
 - 12/10/16 – First ever Board & Staff Retreat; outlined organization history and goals, reviewed board roles and structure, set new 10 year goals and operational policy (1 staff/ 14 board attended)
 - 2/2/17 – 2/4/17 – “Washington State Farmers Market Association Conference” (2 staff, 1 board attended)
 - 3/2/17 – 3/4/17 – “Alaska Farmers Market Organizers Conference” (3 staff, 10 board attended)
 - **Impact on Community:** With a more solidified and defined Board of Directors, the market will continue to be a driving force for local foods in the community. Through more professional development and investment in our employees, we hope to retain them longer, and continually improve skills. By becoming a more systematic organization, we have streamlined how we store and access information, making it easier and more standardized when

assisting producers and customers, as well as for new board members and employees to get up to speed and contribute.

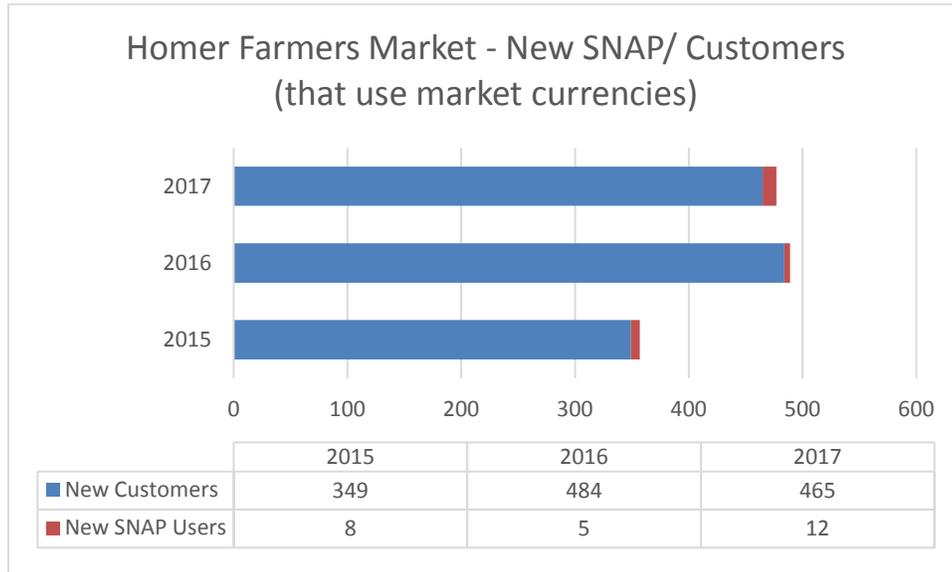


2. Quantify the overall impact of the project on the intended beneficiaries, if applicable, from the baseline date (the start of the award performance period, September 30, 2015). Include further explanation if necessary.
 - i. **Number of direct jobs created:** 1 – Farmers Market Director; this is a new position- Farmers Market Manager received a promotion, taking on new responsibilities
 - ii. **Number of jobs retained:** 3 – EBT Coordinator Positions (shared job) were continued with FMPP funding; market Greeter- role was expanded to coordinate Farmers Market Cooking Demonstrations
 - iii. **Number of indirect jobs created:** 228 (based on an average of 114 paid vendor memberships between 2016-2017, with an average of 2 workers per booth)
 - iv. **Number of markets expanded:** 1 (the Homer Farmers Market; Wednesday markets expanded by 1 hour each, and ran the entire season, 9 weeks longer than in 2015)
 - v. **Number of new markets established:** 0
 - vi. **Market sales increased by \$7,000 and increased by 5.3%.** (based on market coin sales only; vendors do not report total sales to the market management; **16.4%/ \$10,740** growth in 2016, down to a **-5.7%/ -\$3,740** growth between 2015 and 2017)
 - vii. **Number of farmers/producers that have benefited from the project:** 49 farmers
 - **Percent Increase:** 9% increase in number of farmers from 2015 to 2016 (4 additional farmers since 2015)

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?**

We have seen an increase in new SNAP customers at the market, a 33% increase from 2015 to 2017. We've also seen an increase in new customers at the market. The Market expanded

advertising in low access areas (between Kenai and Homer), added statewide advertising (Edible Alaska), and increased advertising and activity on social media (Facebook and Instagram). We promoted our ability to accept a variety of needs based aid (WIC, SNAP, Senior Nutrition) to a larger audience. We also expanded our educational programming to include more Chef at the Market demonstrations (teaching consumers how to use specialty crops), food preservation workshops, and Kids Activities and Special events.



4. Discuss your community partnerships.

i. Who are your community partners?

- Sustainable Homer
- Cook Inletkeeper
- Kenai & Homer Soil and Water Conservation Districts
- Family Farmed
- Center for Alaskan Coastal Studies

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

- Sustainable Homer – guiding board with policy and operational decisions and improvements, promoting market and events
- Cook Inletkeeper – provided computer and printing services, provided space for conference planning meetings, employee interviews, and merchandise storage
- Kenai & Homer Soil and Water Conservation Districts – disseminated information to producers, helped plan and facilitate AK Farmers Market conference and educational opportunities
- Family Farmed – facilitated producer workshop in Homer and Kenai

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

Each group will continue to contribute in similar ways as listed above. We plan to continue to improve upon our goals, beyond the grant period. As mentioned previously, Cook Inletkeeper will incubate the Alaska Farmers Market Association (AFMA) and provide capacity for managing the newest FMPP grant, funding the association. Kenai &

Homer Soil and Water Conservation Districts will continue to play a vital role in building our state's markets. They will be conducting a variety of outreach activities, including more farmer education and needs assessments, as contractors for AFMA. Family Farmed provides information to producers via email and social media.

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

Yes – we contracted Kenai & Homer Soil and Water Conservation Districts to help plan and facilitate conference sessions and farmers education events. Aaron Carpenter was contracted to film and edit conference sessions.

6. Have you publicized any results yet?*

i. **If yes, how did you publicize the results?** Alaska Farmers Market Association website is being updated with new information, including conference content. We have created a statewide market organizers listserv, and Facebook page. Other results have been shared at HFM Annual Meetings, newsletters, social media, and in media coverage.

ii. **To whom did you publicize the results?** Newsletter subscribers, social media followers, newspaper readers, and AFMA associates

iii. **How many stakeholders (i.e. people, entities) did you reach?** Estimated 7,000

*Send any publicity information (brochures, announcements, newsletters, etc.) electronically along with this report. Non-electronic promotional items should be digitally photographed and emailed with this report (do not send the actual item).

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

i. **If so, how did you collect the information?** We collected post Farmers Market season vendor and customer surveys, as well as post-conference surveys.

ii. **What feedback was relayed (specific comments)?**

- “Thanks so much to you and your team! That was the best conference experience I’ve ever had. I’m still abuzz.”
- “Thank you for putting on such an amazing conference. I feel very inspired.”
- “[My favorite part of the market is] The dedication of quality products the locally produced and made items”
- “Felt like staff and atmosphere was best ever this year”
- “A farmer without a market is like a tool without a hand”
- “Thank you so much staff and board members for a top notch farmers market!”

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.**

- **If yes, how much was generated and how was it used to further the objectives of the award?** \$20,010 – all profit from branded merchandise sold during market days; income was invested back into the market to purchase additional merchandise, signage, paid for market greeter salary, kids activities coordinator, attendance for one extra board member to attend WSFMA

conference, internet, telephone, and other related expenses.

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).**

Our biggest success was holding the first ever statewide Farmers market Conference in Alaska. We utilized mostly volunteer hours to support the conference and held it in a more non-traditional conference setting, to save on costs and allow more attendees to participate. We learned that there is a great need for statewide collaboration and support.

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

Objective 1- Increase access to fresh local foods to surrounding food desert areas and to low income populations by continuing to grow the use of SNAP benefits at the market by 25% each year. – We did not meet the 25% growth each year, but we are close to meeting 2015 levels. Increased outreach to public health organizations and more direct marketing to low income populations may help us reach this goal.

Objective 3 - Increase purchase of local foods by at least 10% through expanded community engagement and education about the Homer Farmers Market. – We saw a 16% growth in the first year, then about a 5% decrease the following year. We still reached an average 10.5% growth over the two years of the project. Better metrics (instead of relying on one indicator) for measuring income would be helpful and give a better picture of the market producers' financial status.

- 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:**

Setting your own deadlines ahead of USDA managers is crucial, to allow for any requested editing or updating. The USDA staff was very helpful in answering questions- don't hesitate to call or email your grant manager. Also, when creating your grant proposal, try to think about every cost that may come up, you won't be able to add it later. Creating a streamlined and consistent data collection system would be very helpful as well, when assessing success/failure.

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 will continue to fund our EBT Coordinator position and try to expand this position to include outreach to more SNAP users and public health organizations. We estimate that SNAP redemptions will continue to rise, especially with our community funded matching program. We hope to see our market producers' income, along with their production, rise, so that the public can purchase more local foods directly from farmers. We hope to

see at least a 5% increase in sales, per vendor, each year. We will continue to offer educational opportunities to help bolster this growth. As an outcome of the Statewide Conference, we are currently reinvigorating and organizing the Alaska Farmers Market Association, to continue interstate collaboration and support.

- 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?**
- It would be great if grantees, with similar projects, could be matched with other grantees to share ideas and garner peer support. As a first time grantee, I found some of the reporting forms unclear. The USDA Staff was always very friendly and helpful, and could always guide me in the right direction. Thank you so much for this amazing opportunity.