

FARMERS' MARKET AND LOCAL FOOD PROMOTION PROGRAM (FMLFPP)
Final Performance Report

The final performance report summarizes the outcome and activities of your FMLFPP award objectives. Failure to submit acceptable closeout reports for an existing grant within 90 calendar days following the grant end date may result in exclusion from future AMS grant opportunities.

This final report will be made available to the public once it is approved by FMLFPP 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 due within 90 days of the project's performance period end date (as noted in box 15 of your grant agreement (AMS-33), or sooner if the project is complete. The report must be typed single-spaced in 11-point font, not to exceed fifteen (15) 8.5 x 11 pages (excluding existing Final Performance Report form content). For example, if the Final Performance Report form is six (6) pages before you begin entering your project information into the form, your report may be up to 21 pages (6 pages + 15 pages).

Provide answers to **each question** and all applicable outcome and indicators as it applies to your project. If you are unable to provide a response explain why. It is preferred that you email your completed performance report to your assigned FMLFPP Grants Management Specialist to avoid delays. In case of any extraordinary reason a faxed report can be accepted; please notify your assigned Grants Management Specialist to inform about your submission.

Report Date Range: <i>(e.g. October 1, 2016 -September 30, 2017)</i>	9/30/2014 – 9/29/2016
Date Report Submitted	9/30/2016
Grant Agreement Number: <i>(e.g. 14-LFPPX-XX-</i>	14-FMPXX-NY-0131
Recipient Organization Name:	Farmers Market Federation of NY
Project Title as Stated on Grant Agreement:	Using Farmers Market Websites as a Tool to Develop New Marketing Opportunities for Farmers
Authorized Representative Name:	Galena Ojiem
Authorized Representative Phone:	315-400-1443
Authorized Representative Email:	Gojiem@nyfarmersmarket.com
Year Grant was Awarded:	2014
Amount of Award:	\$39310.00

FMLFPP 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. Executive Summary—In 200 words or less, describe the project's need, purpose, goals, and quantifiable outcomes:

Websites are a powerful marketing tool used by many different types of businesses to gain customers and increase sales. Yet a lack of time, funding, or the knowledge needed to create websites often leaves farmers markets and small-scale direct marketing farmers without this valuable tool. Our project, *Using Farmers Market Websites as a Tool to Develop New Marketing Opportunities for Farmers*, will eliminate these barriers and provide New York State's farmers markets and farmers with customized websites and training on how to use their websites to effectively expand producer-to-consumer sales. Market websites that provide the data that vendors need to make decisions about joining new markets and that streamline the vendor application process will result in an increase in the number of vendors as

well as increased market sales totals. Linking farm websites will result in increased farm sales across all venues for the farm participants as customers will seek out these farms at other venues such as farmstands or CSAs. Our goal is to create 100 new sites (50 market and 50 farm) and provide training to at least 300 site administrators within two years from receipt of funding.

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. Please provide the approved project's objectives:

Objectives		Completed	
		Yes	No*
1	Create 50 new farmers market websites and provide training on how to use farmers market websites to recruit new vendors to all 50 participants plus an additional 100 market managers who already have a website.	√	
2	Create 50 new direct-marketing farmer websites that are linked from the market sites and provide training to farmers on how to use these websites to get new customers and interact with their current customers to increase sales. Also provide training to an additional 100 farmers who already have a site.	√	
3			
4			
5			
6			
7			

**If no is selected for any of the listed objectives, you must expand upon this in the challenges section.*

3. List your accomplishments for the project's performance period and indicate how these accomplishments assisted in the fulfillment of your project's objectives. Please include additional objectives approved by FMLFPP during the grant performance period, and highlight the impact that activities had on the project's beneficiaries.

Accomplishments	Relevance to Objective, Outcome, and/or Indicator
We held two webinars called Cultivating Success - Making a Website Work for your Farm to recruit farm participants for the program and teach farms about why websites are important. These were attended by 52 people.	This accomplishment is related to Outcome 2 Indicators 1 and 2.
We held two webinars called Cultivating Success - Making a Website Work for your Market to recruit market participants for the program and teach markets about why websites are important. These were attended by 18 people.	This accomplishment is related to Outcome 2 Indicators 1 and 2.
We also gave a presentation about the program and the benefits of websites for markets/farms at the Producer's Expo in Syracuse and promoted enrollment through our newsletter, list serves, website, and social media channels. These additional methods reached over 300 additional people.	This accomplishment is related to Outcome 2 Indicators 1 and 2.

In total from all these recruitment efforts we were able to enroll 127 people to participate in the program and from those participants we completed 50 farm sites and 11 market sites (unfortunately not everyone who enrolled continued their participation through to a completed site).	This accomplishment is related to Outcome 2 Indicators 1 and 2.
We created a 26 page color-coded Guidebook to inform participants as to how to best maintain and update their sites. So far it has been viewed 248 people.	This accomplishment is related to Outcome 2 Indicators 1 and 2.
We created a series of 8 Instructional Videos to accompany the Guidebook and walk participants through the steps needed to maintain and update their sites. This has been viewed by 236 people.	This accomplishment is related to Outcome 2 Indicators 1 and 2.
We identified additional training needs and hosted two additional webinar workshops called Using WordPress Behind the Scenes attended by 19 participants. This webinar was to review the Guidebook and then show them additional functionality that could be added to their sites using plugins. We also answered any questions about how to update and customize the websites by showing them live how to make the changes.	This accomplishment is related to Outcome 2 Indicators 1 and 2.
Lastly we distributed the training materials to over 100 CCE Educators through email and list serves. They can use them to teach farmers and market managers about websites on their own.	This accomplishment is related to Outcome 2 Indicators 1 and 2.

4. Please list any challenges experienced during the project’s period of performance. Provide the corrective actions taken to address these issues.

Challenges (Issues)	Corrective Actions and/or Project Changes (s)
One challenge was despite an initial high amount of interest, we did not get enough market managers to participate in the program. The main reasons listed for not wanting to participate were that they were working as a volunteer and didn’t have the time to donate to create a website for the market in addition to their other volunteer duties. Another thing that contributed to the difficulty getting market sites to create was that there are fewer markets than farmers and some markets already have a site. Those that didn’t had limited time and resources. Some were unsure about being able to afford ongoing hosting	Focusing more heavily on the farm websites and creating more training materials to make it easier for managers to participate.

<p>Another challenge was that many of the farmers and market managers were even more tech illiterate than we had planned for and as such they weren't able to participate without additional assistance. For example, one of the basic requirements was to submit a jpg or png file of one's logo along with text for the site and pictures in a webform. We had some participants who did not have a logo and many who sent things that were not logos such as a picture of their farm, an image they found online, a Microsoft Word Document or PDF. Many/most of them were missing some of the required information on the form.</p>	<p>We worked with people to help them understand what a logo was and how they could get one created and submit it to us. We helped work through any misunderstandings or technical challenges in submitting the form with all of their website info and allowed email and phone calls to be used instead where that was easier for the participants. Many people had trouble uploading documents and pictures to the form and had to submit them through multiple emails instead. This did take additional time but we were able to make it work because the number of sites was reduced.</p>
<p>Another challenge was many people had trouble writing the content for their site. Some still have not gotten back to us with their photos or content.</p>	<p>I'm not sure if there is an easy solution to this. Reminders did not seem to be effective for some people. Perhaps adding content creation to the program would have helped, but business owners or market managers know their farm/market best. They may need some additional training on content creation or to work with a content expert 1:1.</p>

5. Quantify the overall progress on the outcomes and indicators of your project. Include further explanation if necessary.

In total we held 6 one and a half hour educational webinar sessions that were attended by 89 people. We recruited 127 participants and saw 61 new websites through to completion. We created one 26 page Guidebook and 8 Instructional Videos that will be housed on our website in perpetuity and help market managers and farmers (both those who participated in the project and those who did not) to understand how to use a WordPress website to promote their market or farm and shared these materials with over 100 Extension Educators. On the pages that follow are some examples of successfully completed sites.



Our Farm



OUR ORIGINS

Cobblestone Creek Farm is a third generation farm on the outskirts of Syracuse. Once a dairy and large-scale grain farm, Steve and Diane Eggert have transitioned the farm back to its origins of raising vegetables for direct consumer sales.

ENVIRONMENTALLY SOUND

Using environmentally sound practices that protect nearby water and wildlife, and protect the rich fertile soils of the farm, Steve and Diane raise a bountiful variety of high quality, flavorful vegetables and herbs that are offered at the farmers markets in Hamilton, NY.

Festival Farmers Market



Our Market



Welcome to the "little market with the big heart"... Festival Farmers Market of Cobleskill, NY, located in 'picture perfect Schoharie County! We serve the needs of the occasional cook as well as the avid canner... and everyone in between! Our farmers come from less than 50 miles in any direction and take great pride in the variety of produce and products offered, as well as how it is grown and produced.

Our seasonal hours of operation are 10:00am - 2:00pm each Saturday and 3:00pm - 5:00pm on Wednesdays. We accept cash, WIC, EBT, and Fresh Connect Checks.

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Festival Farmers Market
3 hrs
HOW SWEET IT IS!!! Come on over to the Festival Farmers Market this Saturday, September 17th... as a destination, or on your way to other happenings in the area! BRING the KIDS to meet the



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Our Farm



OUR FARM ABOUT HISTORY PHOTOS BLOG PRODUCTS DIRECTIONS CONTACT US

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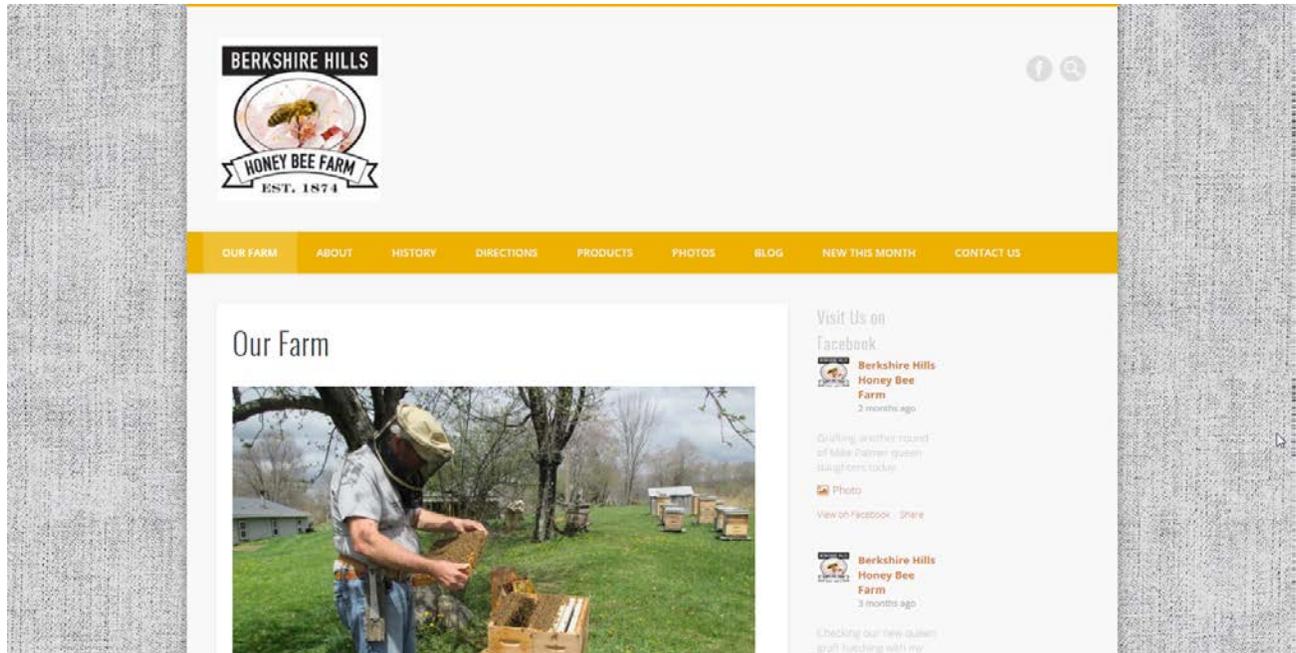
Be the first of your friends to like this



Hoeffner Farms added 3 new photos. September 10 at 11:05am

Montgomery Day!!!!





Although we did not quite make our goal of 100 completed sites, we did have a huge impact on the 61 organizations we were able to help and learned a lot in the process that will help us refine future programming in the area of farm and market websites.

Outcome 1: To Increase Consumption of and Access to Locally and Regionally Produced Agricultural Products.

Indicator	Description	Number
1.	Total number of consumers, farm and ranch operations, or wholesale buyers reached	
1.a.	The number that gained knowledge on how to buy or sell local/regional food OR aggregate, store, produce, and/or distribute local/regional food	
1.b.	The number that reported an intention to buy or sell local/regional food OR aggregate, store, produce, and/or distribute local/regional food	
1.c.	The number that reported buying, selling, consuming more or supporting the consumption of local/regional food that they aggregate, store, produce, and/or distribute	
2.	Total number of individuals (culinary professionals, institutional kitchens, entrepreneurs such as kitchen incubators/shared-use kitchens, etc.) reached	
2.a.	The number that gained knowledge on how to access, produce, prepare, and/or preserve locally and regionally produced agricultural products	
2.b.	The number that reported an intention to access, produce, prepare, and/or preserve locally and regionally produced agricultural products	
2.c.	The number that reported supplementing their diets with locally and regionally produced agricultural products that they produced, prepared, preserved, and/or obtained	

Outcome 2: Increase Customers and sales of local and regional agricultural products.

Indicator	Description	Number
1.	Sales increased as a result of marketing and/or promotion activities during the project performance period.	
	Original Sales Amount (in dollars)	
	Resulted Sales Amount (in dollars)	
	Percent Change $((n_{\text{final}} - n_{\text{initial}}) / n_{\text{initial}}) * 100 = \% \text{ change}$	
2.	Customer counts increased during the project performance period.	
	Original Customer Count	
	Resulted Customer Count	
	Percent Change $((n_{\text{final}} - n_{\text{initial}}) / n_{\text{initial}}) * 100 = \% \text{ change}$	

Outcome 3: Develop new market opportunities for farm and ranch operations serving local markets.

Indicator	Description	Number
1.	Number of new and/or existing delivery systems/access points of those reached that expanded and/or improved offerings of	
1.a.	Farmers markets	
1.b.	Roadside stands	
1.c.	Community supported agriculture programs	
1.d.	Agritourism activities	
1.e.	Other direct producer-to-consumer market opportunities	
1.f.	Local and regional Food Business Enterprises that process, aggregate, distribute, or store locally and regionally produced agricultural products	

Indicator	Description	Number
2.	Number of local and regional farmers and ranchers, processors, aggregators, and/or distributors that reported	
2.a.	An increase in revenue expressed in dollars	
2.b.	A gained knowledge about new market opportunities through technical assistance and education programs	
3.	Number of	
3.a.	New rural/urban careers created (Difference between "jobs" and "careers": jobs are net gain of paid employment; new businesses created or adopted can indicate new careers)	
3.b.	Jobs maintained/created	
3.c.	New beginning farmers who went into local/regional food production	
3.d.	Socially disadvantaged famers who went into local/regional food production	
3.e.	Business plans developed	

Outcome 4: Improve the food safety of locally and regionally produced agricultural products.
Only applicable to projects focused on food safety!

Indicator	Description	Number
1.	Number of individuals who learned about prevention, detection, control, and intervention food safety practices	
2.	Number of those individuals who reported increasing their food safety skills and knowledge	
3.	Number of growers or producers who obtained on-farm food safety certifications (such as Good Agricultural Practices or Good Handling Practices)	

Outcome 5: Quantify the overall progress on this outcome indicator based on relevant project activities not covered above.
This indicator must reflect the project narrative's required additional outcome indicator.

We increased sales and customer counts among the participating farms and farmers markets. Unfortunately, there is no good means to quantify an exact amount. We asked both populations for the total number of increased sales and every respondent answered "I don't know" for that particular question. When asked the reason for this the answers touched on several themes. For markets: 1. There is no way to know exactly how much sales increased as a result of the new website because we don't collect that information from our farmers. 2. We collect sales data from our farmers but it is considered confidential and we can't release it to third parties. 3. We collect sales data from our farmers but we don't feel we can answer this question because sales fluctuate from year to year depending on several factors such as weather patterns/drought, crop yields, labor rates etc. For farms, some answered that they don't share their sales data and others answered that they didn't know the exact change in sales as a result of having a website for the same reason as number 3 above. The closest we can come to quantifying the success of this project is shown in the graphs that follow.

6. Discuss your community partnerships (include applicant staff and external partners).
 - i. Who were your community partners?
 - ii. How did they contribute to the overall results of the FMLFPP project?
 - iii. How will they continue to contribute to your project's future activities, beyond the performance period of this FMLFPP grant?
 - iv. What feedback have the partners provided (specific comments) about the results of the project?

We did not work with any community partners on this particular project.

7. How do you plan to publicize the results?

- i. To whom (i.e. people, entities) do you plan to publicize the project results?
- ii. When do you plan to publicize the results?

*If you have publicized the results, please 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).

This was not a research study but we do plan to discuss the closing of the project and relevant lessons learned on our blog and publicize it through our mailing list and list serves as well as social media channels. We will also showcase some of the completed websites as examples. Here is a link to the first blog post on this topic: <http://www.nyfarmersmarket.com/cultivating-success-program-highlights/>.

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

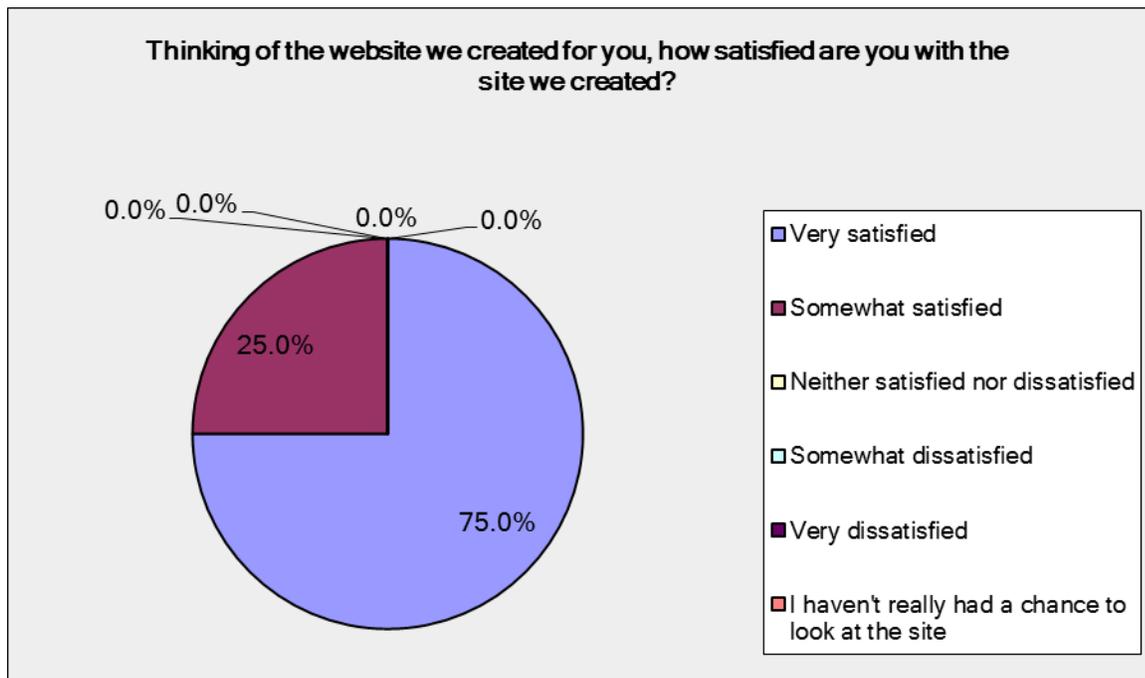
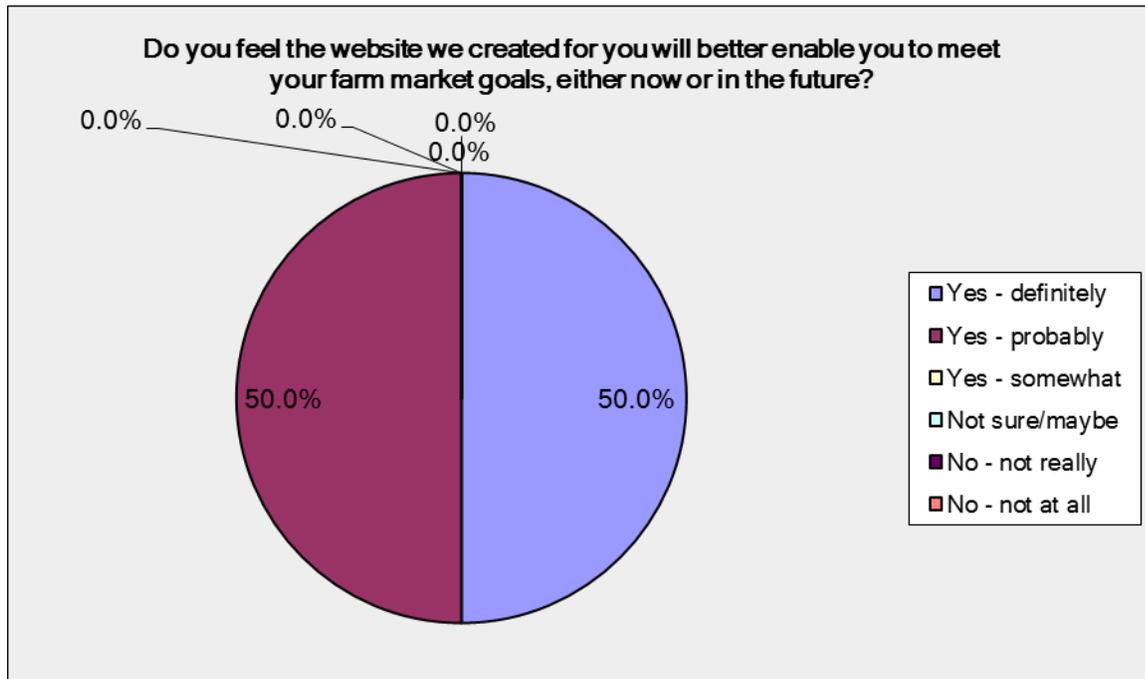
- i. If so, how did you collect the information?
- ii. What feedback was relayed (specific comments)?

Yes. We received many unsolicited testimonials received throughout the project period. Here are a couple examples of these:

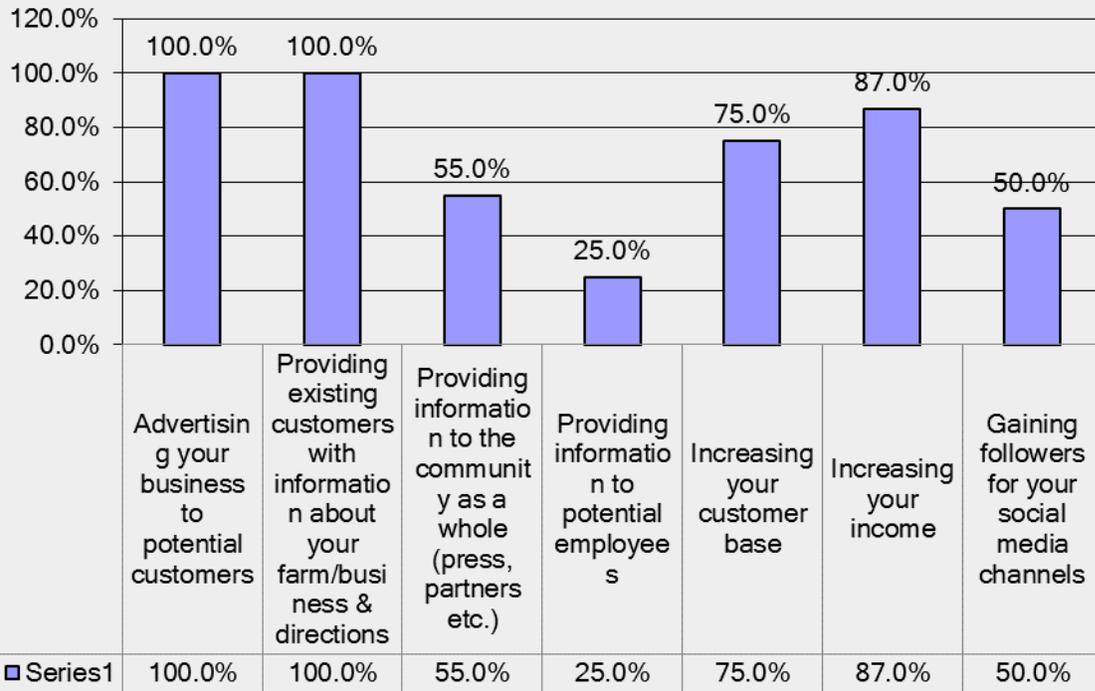
- "Thank you so much! NEVER thought I would say I am actually having fun doing this - working with websites has always been such a struggle before."~ Market Website Participant
- "Loving the website your group designed. Wow! Slick, professional."~ Farm Website Participant
- "I want you to know I really feel like I have the tools to make this website work and update it on a regular basis. I am going to start small and work on it and may send you e-mails from time to time but this has been a FABULOUS project. Thank you again." ~ Farm Website Participant

We also conducted a survey of the participants as a form of program evaluation. Results are shown in graph form on the following pages.

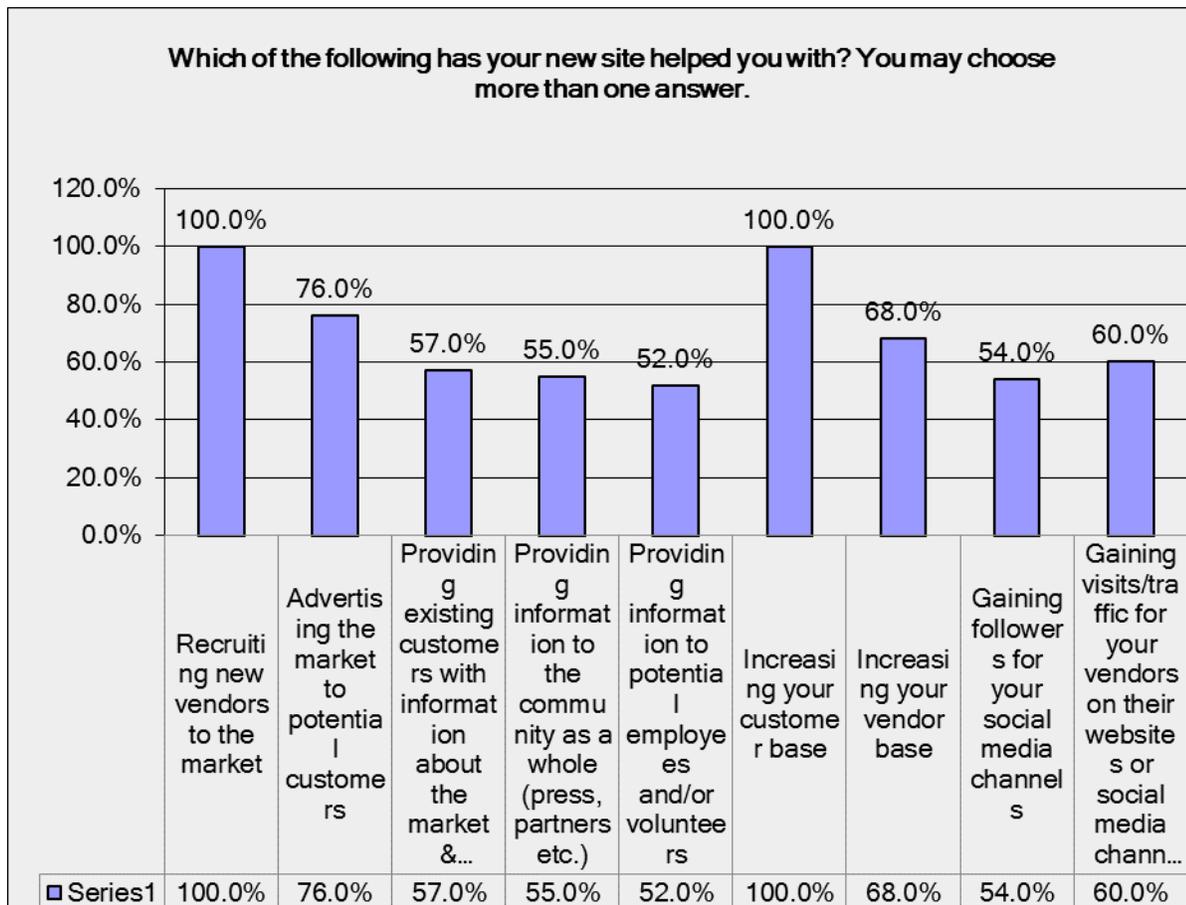
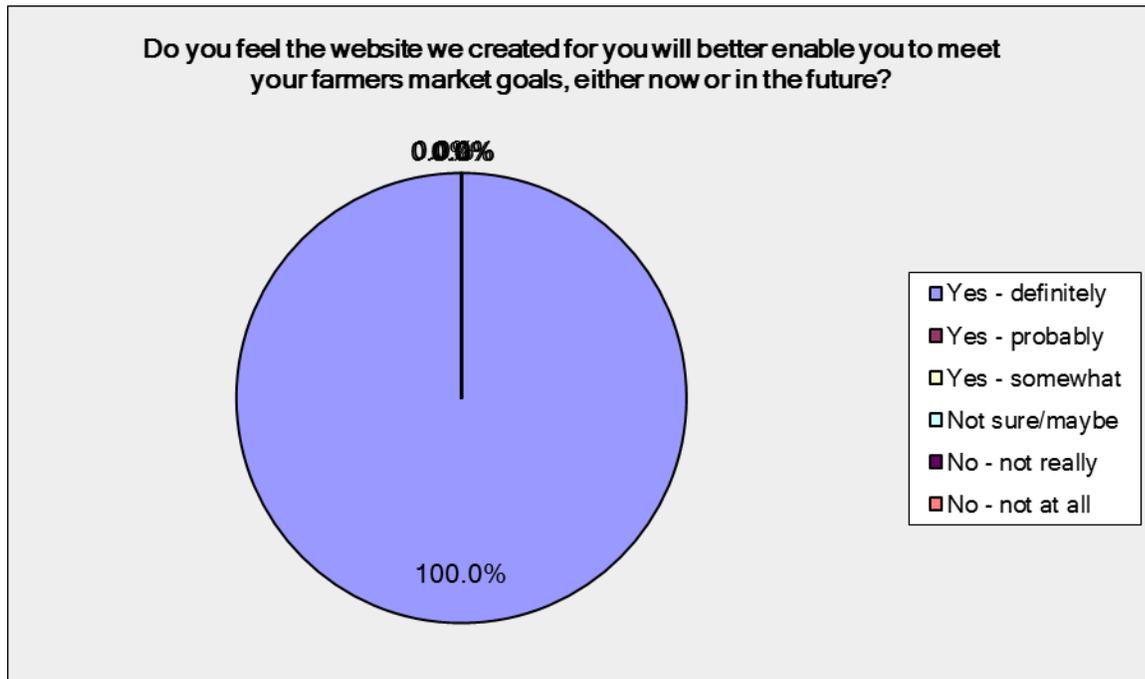
For the Farmer/Vendor Websites Specifically:



Which of the following has your new site helped you with? You may choose more than one answer.



For the Farmers Market Websites:



9. 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: Yes
- ii. Did the project generate any income? Yes No
 - a. If yes, \$_____ generated and how was it used to further the objectives of this project?
- iii. In the table below include the total amount of **federal funds spent** during the grant performance period (**Do not** include matching or in-kind contributions):

Categories	Amount Approved in Budget	Actual Federal Expenditures (Federal Funds ONLY)
Personnel:	\$32,640	\$37,858.76
Fringe:		
Contractual:		
Equipment:		
Travel:		
Supplies:	\$300	\$0
Other:	\$6370	\$1451.24
Indirect Costs:		
TOTAL:	\$39,310	

- iv. **ONLY for LFPP recipients:** Provide the amount of matching funds/in-kind contributions used during the grant performance period.

Categories	Match Approved in Budget	Actual Match Expenditures
Personnel:		
Fringe:		
Contractual:		
Equipment:		
Travel:		
Supplies:		
Other:		
Indirect Costs:		
TOTAL:		

10. 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).
- ii. If goals or outcome measures were not achieved, identify and share the lessons learned to help others expedite problem-solving:
- 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:

- iv. Discuss if and how the result of this project can be adapted to other regions, communities, and/or agricultural systems.

From a technical standpoint we learned that we were able to minimize hosting costs greatly by going with a group hosting provider. We choose the “reseller” plan through Green Geeks who was able to host all of the websites for one monthly fee, saving us thousands on hosting. Each website owner can still have their own individual account and login and maintain ownership over the site but we benefited from a better rate and also had the ability to login in manage the sites all at once if needed.

The use of a web form to gather data and make completing the sites easier from an administrative standpoint worked well with some participants and not so well with others. If doing a similar project in the future or someone else is running a similar project, we would recommend some kind of initial assessment to help understand each participant’s tech skills and ability to participate in the project would be a great starting place. Will the participant be able to get you the deliverables needed? If not is there a method to work around it or does that mean this person isn’t qualified to participate? Working with a logo designer and/or content creator or getting interns from a local college to help those who needed additional help with these items would definitely be a good add-on to consider.

We had assumed that participants would be happy to get a website designed for them and not have to pay for the design or for someone to teach them how to change, maintain, and update their sites. And when it came to farmers market vendors this was certainly the case. They had a direct stake in getting their name on the web and having a successful, professional website – it would give them more income. When it came to farmers markets though, we found that many market managers did not have enough of a stake in having a website since it wouldn’t directly increase their income. Managers who were paid often had the resources to afford to pay someone to create a website for them. In some cases they had already done this and in some cases they watched our webinar on the value of having a website and decided at that point to hire someone (which is great - our goal was met, just in another way). We were hoping to reach the markets who did not currently have a website or plans/a budget to create one but what we found is that these same markets also did not have the time/energy to create a site even though we were giving it to them for free. They were too bogged down with the day to day tasks of managing the market and making sure that the bare minimum tasks got completed to focus on things like advertising, building their market’s customer base, and promotion. Future projects in the area of farmers market sites should include a component that compensates volunteer market managers for their time in creating and managing a site and/or provides for long-term payment of hosting and domain fees so markets aren’t worried about future budgetary and time constraints. Alleviating these two concerns would go a long way towards encouraging participation and markets would benefit greatly since the market managers who did participate reported even higher satisfaction with the program than the farmers did: while 50% of farmers and vendors who had a site created by us stated that they thought the website would definitely help them meet their farm goals (the other 50% saying probably), a full 100% of the market participants stated that their new website would definitely help them meet their market goals.

This project could be adapted to many other regions, communities, or agricultural systems keeping in mind both the successes and lessons learned. Feel free to contact the Farmers Market Federation for more details on the project if you plan to replicate it and we will be happy to assist.

11. Future Work:

- i. How will you continue the work of this project beyond this grant? In other words, how will you implement 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.
- 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?

The websites that were created in the grant period will continue to be used by the farmer/vendors and markets for as long as they so choose. The Guidebook and Instructional Videos will be on our website in perpetuity and will be available to be viewed by those people as well as others who want to create a farm or market website. They will also be available to CCE Educators in perpetuity. We will use the knowledge gained in doing this project to inform future work in the area of farm and market websites and related trainings. Future activities could include redoing the Farm Websites aspect of the project to include more farmers since that part of the project was highly successful as is OR creating a newly reenvisioned Market Websites project that addresses the concerns mentioned above.