

Farmers Market Promotion Program
Final Performance Report
For the Period of October 1, 2014 – September 30th, 2016

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| Date: | March 31, 2017 |
| Recipient Name: | Berea Farmers Market Cooperative |
| Project Title: | Berea Farmers Market Growing Our Community |
| Grant Number: | 14-FMPPX-KY-0069 |
| Project Location: | Berea, Kentucky |
| Year of Grant Award | 2014 |
| Amount Awarded: | \$ 47,041 |
| Contact: | Aimee Russillo arussillo@liseed.com |

Program Summary:

Provide a brief summary regarding the goals and objectives, activities performed, beneficiaries, collaborators, and your most impressive (result) measurement.

Nestled in the foothills to the Appalachians, Berea is a small town with lots of charm. It has a vibrant arts colony, a lively folk music community and a growing local food movement. It also has a poverty rate of 26%, twice the national average and has obesity, diabetes and heart disease rates that are among the highest in the country. Like the rest of the nation, Berea families are growing up on convenience and processed foods without much knowledge about cooking and eating fresh food. As artists, farmers and chefs of this community, the Berea Farmers Market (BFM) believes we are a source of healthful food for our neighbors while also providing economic growth for our businesses. With the help of USDA FMPP grant funds, we were able to create a robust culture of local food that is available and accessible to all.

The first goal of the grant was to increase consumer demand for farmers' market products. Grant funding helped us increase our visibility in the community with new signage and the implementation of a diverse marketing plan. We created a communal gathering place where families enjoyed entertainment or learned new ways of preparing farm products while their kids participated in market sponsored activities. We developed promotional materials targeting low income consumers and distributed them to organizations that serve low wage earning families. We spotlighted individual vendors with a unique recipe book that fostered personal connections between our producers and customers. We culminated each year of the grant with a farm to table community meal where farmers' market food was expertly prepared by local chefs to create an incredible farm to table dinner enjoyed by several hundred community members discussing local food over local food. Most importantly, we kept our focus on the needs of our low income

customers knowing that serving the most vulnerable residents has positive repercussions for the entire community.

The second goal was to develop and improve producer market opportunities. Our farmers were connected to training and resources to expand farm production and value added food options. We created a vendor handbook to clarify our policies and to list farmers support programs. During the grant period, both our farmers' production and the market's product diversity grew.

The third goal was to ensure effective sustainable market support functions. Our board became better organized by clarifying market objectives, resources, policies and procedures. We created a market manual for the board and implemented a yearly strategic planning meeting. Those working with the market and board now have the resources needed to decrease stress with day to day operations and to focus more time on long term planning.

We had dozens of community partners helping us throughout this grant period giving us financial support, professional expertise, numerous volunteers, helpful resources and enjoyable entertainment. We recognized them below in the "Activities" section. We are particularly grateful for the financial support of WellCare Health Plans to our double dollars and Sprouts Club programs and for the free use of property for our outdoor markets at Berea College and People's Bank. Also, we could not have accomplished the goals of this grant without countless hours of volunteer work from both Berea College and Eastern Kentucky University (EKU) professors and students that helped design, implement and evaluate the activities of this grant.

"The key to transforming a place into a thriving destination comes down to offering a range of reasons to be there. It's not enough to sell fresh local produce – you need to find a collection of ways to make the market interesting and useful for everybody in the community.

"Partnership for a Fit for Kentucky"

Goals and Objectives:

The overall goal of the Berea Farmers Market (BFM) USDA Farmers Market Promotion Project (FMPP) was to increase consumption of healthful, local food for all residents of Berea and the surrounding counties through a pull (consumer demand) and push (availability and accessibility) strategy. BFM operates in Low Income/Low Access project priority zones characterized by food insecure communities. The all growers market had struggled with an economically viable and reliable customer base due to several challenges including: no permanent space, lack of awareness, public support and resources. The growing interest and recognition that buying local has health and economic benefits had brought together several stakeholders with the vision of creating a robust culture of local food available and accessible to all people. BFM serves as the aggregation point for creating the direct market connection between producers and consumers.

The grant helped build regional demand for locally produced, healthful food through consumer outreach, promotion and education. The project coordinator worked with producers to ensure a reliable and varied supply of high quality fresh products for consumer choice. The grant also helped equip those working with the market and board members with the training and resources needed to ensure a strong and sustainable market. Accessibility of fresh and healthy foods for all residents was a critical component of the project, particularly in food insecure areas.

Below is an outline of the grant goals with details in the following section:

Goal #1: Increasing Consumer Demand for Local Products

Objective 1.1: Increasing consumers' knowledge of the importance of local food and farms to our economy and food security

Objective 1.2: Connecting consumers to local food and producers.

Objective 1.3: Increase accessibility of fresh and healthy food for all residents

Goal #2: Developing and improving producer market opportunities

Objective 2.1: Equip farmers with the tools necessary to run successful markets

Objective 2.2: Expansion and diversification of a reliable supply

Goal #3: Ensure effective sustainable market support functions

Objective 3.1: Credible, transparent management for Impact

Objective 3.2: Equip workers and volunteers with the tools necessary to run successful markets

Objective 3.3: Establish partnerships with other organizations to leverage resources

Activities:

Goal #1: Increasing Consumer Demand for Local Products

Activity 1.1.1: Implement Strategic Marketing Plan. BFM launched a variety of marketing campaigns both broadly to area residents as well as targeted to low income consumers. Before grant funding, advertisements were limited to twice a year using postcards and fliers distributed sparsely around town, the website was difficult to locate through a Google search and social media was limited to infrequent posts to Facebook. The FMPP grant provided funding for website enhancement, radio and newspaper advertisements, printing of fliers and postcards and contractors to create and manage marketing. Previously, there were only four small, tattered yard signs to direct people to the market and no permanent signage, so on-site signage was purchased:



- 2 large foldable chalkboards
- 4 large and 4 medium portable yard signs
- 2 large and 1 medium semi-permanent street signs
- 2 foldable chalkboard signs
- 2 tabletop chalk boards
- Several vinyl paste-overs to provide updates to semi-permanent signs as we changed hours & locations throughout the year

PARTNERS: Berea Tourism gave free advertising on their website and social media throughout the grant period. Berea College CELTS student volunteer club helped distribute fliers at market locations. Two local radio stations supported the efforts. WEKU (Richmond region) gave public service announcements and WCYO gave free radio time for farmer interviews. People's Bank provided a cost share on road signs. Berea College Economics and Business Program provided ongoing consultation around marketing strategies.

Activity 1.1.2 Eat Local 101 Education: Prior to the grant, no materials on eating locally were available and cooking demonstrations were limited to an occasional sampling by the Extension office. During the grant period there were 10 cooking demonstrations with sampling using farmers market products and recipe cards and an "Eating on a Budget" brochure were developed.



PARTNERS: Volunteer chefs were provided by Madison County Agriculture Extension Office and by ECU Dietetics Department supported programs. Local individuals who specialize in nutrition and wellness also volunteered their talents including “Make Mead Like a Viking”, “Personal Journey Wellness” and “Wellness With Katya”. Skilled local home cooks also volunteered their time.

Activity 1.2.1 Know your Farmer: BFM had no formal ways to personally connect vendors with



customers previous to the grant. With FMPP funding, locally sourced, hand crafted name tags were purchased, vendor profiles created and vendor recipe cards with the farmer profiles were developed to connect and create a longer term relationship between producers and consumers.

Activity 1.2.2. Second Saturdays Promotions: Entertainment and children’s activities were rare at the market up to the FMPP, but the grant funded 10 “Second Saturday Celebrations” each with cooking demonstrations, “Sprouts Club” children’s activities, music and other entertainment which attracted multi-generational crowds who came and stayed often for hours creating a real community space and increasing sales . Each market season culminated with a Community Meal that brought together hundreds of community supporters to eat and discuss local food and food systems.

PARTNERS :

Second Saturdays: Berea Tourism provided free advertising on their website and social media for 2nd Saturdays and the annual Community Dinner, “Broadway Bodywork” provided free dance performances, Cedar Haven Wellness Center conducted free yoga classes, Foley’s Florist donated balloons for 2nd Saturday.

Community Meal: Girl Scouts and Boy Scouts helped serve and clean up. Kiwanis Club consulted about logistics of hosting a fund raiser meal. Sonny’s BBQ, Streetside Café, Noodle Nirvana, Berea College Farm Store either donated or gave a deep discount for their chef’s services. “Renmeleon” designed a slideshow featuring photos and profiles of each vendor.

Community Meal Fiscal Sponsors: People’s Bank, Sticks and Stones Landscaping, Berea Coffee and Tea, Berea Arts Council and Community Trust Bank.



Activity 1.2.3 Sprouts Club: Before the grant, children’s activities were infrequent at the market. The grant supported an Outreach Coordinator (OC) to launch and facilitate “Sprouts Club” for kids. 50 recycled tee-shirt shopping bags were hand made by the outreach coordinator and volunteers. The BFM purchased new signage was created for the club.

PARTNERS: Activities were designed and implemented by Mike’s Hike and Bike, Bright Beginnings Day Care Center, Madison County Public Library and Berea Fire Department. The regional not for profit Grow Appalachia, in conjunction with the Neighborhood Food Project staffed by AmeriCorps and Vista volunteers, were present with activities and meals. WellCare Health Plans provided funding for market tokens for participants.

Activity 1.3.1 Outreach to low income/marginalized communities: Before the grant, BFM had little outreach or advertising to low income consumers due to the challenges in identifying and reaching them. With no public transportation, many lacked access to the market. Because of the expansion of the market, Berea Tourism added the BFM on their tourist trolley stop. The grant provided funding for low income targeted print material, an “Eating on a Budget” brochure, and those working with the market to present to organizations serving or made up of low income populations. During the first year of the grant period, we became a gleaning site for Glean Madison County and began donating left over farm products at the end of market to local food banks and non-profits. During the second year of the grant, we became a Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) site where all children between the ages of 1-18 years could have a free, nutritious lunch.

PARTNERS: See Accomplishments for Activity 3.3.3 for a list of organizations targeting or made up of low income residents with whom we partnered. We had meetings with directors or these organization, gave presentations to groups detailing our low income outreach programs or got assistance with distribution of low income targeted print materials. Working together with these partners, we created and implemented strategies to raise awareness on healthy foods, as well as increase access.

Activity 1.3.2. Build and retain low income customer base: BFM had acquired EBT equipment and market tokens prior to the grant, but had inadequate training materials to help volunteers run the EBT equipment. To improve market booth functions, we provided volunteer trainings, created a volunteer handbook and purchased volunteer aprons so volunteers were easily identifiable. We purchased signage for the market to direct customers to the market booth and to highlight different activities at the market. We also trained volunteers to circulate within the market to welcome new customers and offer assistance if needed.

PARTNERS: EKU Dietetics Program and University of Kentucky Extension Agency-Master Gardeners provided volunteers to help run the market booth and offer hospitality to new customers.

Goal #2: Developing and improving producer market opportunities

Activity 2.1.1. Producer Marketing Manual: Previous to the grant, BFM had no formal documents detailing rules and expectations from our membership. With FMPP support, we created both a print and on-line producer manual that contained our rules, regulations and FAQs about the market in order to support the professionalization of producers. The manual is also rich in resources for farmers to help them answer many of the questions that come up for producers and generally improve their businesses. The Producer Market Manual is included with this report.

PARTNERS: Resources for the manual came from Community Farm Alliance, Kentucky Department of Agriculture, Small Farm Central, University of Kentucky Extension Agency, Lexington Farmers Market, Bluegrass Farmers Market

Activity 2.1.2 Producer Peer Learning: We traveled to two farmers market with similar size and mission as BFM to exchange lessons learned, learn from their successes and create a peer network. We purchased and maintained a bulletin board at the market for vendors and those working with the market to share information about conferences, trainings and funding opportunities. The Market Manager organized two peer-to-peer farm tours to provide opportunities and space for the producers to share farming and business strategies.

PARTNERS: Somerset Farmers Market in Somerset, KY & Community Farmers Market in Bowling Green, KY

Activity 2.2.1 Producer Training and Education: Through the grant, we provided funding for vendors to attend home based micro-processing classes and farming workshops in order to improve their skills and broaden their potential sales opportunities.

PARTNERS: Kentucky Department of Agriculture, University of KY Extension Agency

Goal #3: Ensure effective sustainable market support functions

Activity 3.1.1: Annual Work plan Develop
We initiated annual work plans for each year of the grant to actively discuss what had worked, lessons learned from the other markets, producer peer learning and to prioritize activities based on community and producer needs.

Activity 3.1.2.Hiring of part time Outreach Coordinator: Prior to the grant, market manager hours were limited with little extra time for marketing or outreach. Through the grant, an Outreach Coordinator (OC) working 40 hours a month was hired. The market manager's hours and responsibilities were expanded to cover project management of the FMPP grant.

Activity 3.1.3.Monitoring and Evaluation: A monitoring and evaluation plan was developed in the beginning of the grant to track daily, monthly, quarterly and yearly metrics. Progress reports of the grant were regularly provided at board meetings and vendor meetings for discussion and input in order to adapt strategies. An abbreviated annual report was presented at the Community Meal. These reports were submitted with USDA FMPP reports as part of the grant requirements.

Activity 3.2.1. Business and Strategic planning training: The Market Manager received mentoring throughout the grant period from an experienced grant manager. One community planning meeting was held at the launch of the grant to gather input and priorities from community members, partners, local stakeholders and individuals. Two strategic planning meetings for board & vendors with project contracts and were held at the beginning of each grant year.

PARTNERS: Brushy Fork Institute at Berea College, Kentucky Center for Agriculture & Rural Development.

Activity 3.2.2. Volunteer Plan and Management: BFM entered the grant with very few volunteers so we integrated plans for recruitment of new volunteers into the annual work plan. We created a volunteer manual and used that during training of new volunteers to ramp up our pool of volunteers, thus expanding our resources and building a base of community supporters.

Activity 3.2.3 Develop Market Manual
Before the grant, our legal documents were incomplete and stored in different places. With Board and volunteer transitions, our policies and procedures were underdeveloped and not formalized. The board updated and approved incomplete documents and developed and approved new policies and procedures. The Market Manager collected and organized these in a Market Manual for board and vendor use. These have created a strong basis for the professionalization of the market and enabled us to grow and manage the market more effectively.

PARTNERS: Community Farm Alliance, UK Extension Agency, Kentucky Department of Agriculture, Kentucky Center for Agriculture and Rural Development

Activity 3.3.3. Formalize Partnerships

During the grant period we worked with around 45 different agencies, institutions, businesses and community groups for presentations, donations, grant funding, volunteers, information sharing and collaboration. See Accomplishments 3.3.3 for a list of partner organizations. The partners were a fundamental part of the success of the grant, and created the foundation going forward through the strong ties developed and relationships built.

Accomplishments:

Complete metrics for the below accomplishments can be found on pp. 29-31

Goal #1: Increasing Consumer Demand for Local Food Products

The FMPP grant increased customer traffic flow and vendor sales in a significant way. We didn't keep records of customer counts before the grant so we used year 1 of the grant as our baseline. Our counts increased by 32% from the end of year one to the end of year two. That increase of foot traffic certainly impacted sales. Yearly vendor sales just prior to the grant was \$89,287.71. After year one they were \$116,594.16 and by the end of the grant, yearly sales were \$159,289.24 for a total increase from baseline of 78%.

Activity 1.1.1: Implement Strategic Marketing Plan.

The outreach coordinator led the implementation of a strategic marketing plan to improve market communications with consumers through electronic media, print and radio advertising, new signage and print materials.

Launch Social Media Campaign:

NEWSLETTER: Upon hiring an outreach coordinator in November 2014, BFM re-invigorated a weekly newsletter using the e-mail marketing service, MailChimp. By creating newsletter subscription links on the BFM Facebook page and on the BFM website and by collecting customer contact information at the market, the coordinator expanded the subscriber list from 166 subscribers in November 2014 to 515 by the end of the grant period.

The biggest challenge with newsletter communication is to get customers to view the e-mail once it reaches their in-box. Open rates increased if there was a major announcement about the market (i.e. moving to a new location), a highly desired product newly available (i.e. strawberries) or a tasty recipe (i.e. kale chips). It is difficult to create fresh and engaging newsletters week after week but subscribing to other farmers market newsletters and taking Small Farm Central's free on-line marketing course helped with discovering new ideas. Overall, the open rates stayed above the industry average of 20%.

SOCIAL MEDIA: In addition to Facebook, the O.C. expanded BFM social media to include Twitter and Instagram. Links to subscribe to social media platforms were placed on the BFM website and the three platforms were managed on Hootsuite. Hootsuite allows the user to create one post that can be shared on several platforms and posts can be scheduled to be released at later dates. Informal interviews conducted at the market booth showed that Facebook was best at recruiting new customers, especially low income so the O.C. focused posts on this platform. BFM Facebook following doubled during the grant period (1200 in September 2014 to 2334 in September 2016) and Instagram grew to 458. Twitter was more sluggish growing to 54 followers.

Because of Facebook's change in algorithms, BFM posts had a marked decrease in views. The best way to reach customers was to increase the number of posts to 7-10 per week, share posts on

the two Berea community pages, encourage vendors to share BFM posts on their FB pages and through paid post boosts. So, despite the algorithm changes, our total post views increased from 14,145 at the end of year one to 133,557 by the end of year two!!.

WEBSITE: Before the grant, it was difficult to locate the BFM's website with an on-line search and the content of the site was stagnating. After doing price comparisons of what services would be affordable within the grant budget, it was decided to hire "Brand Native" to develop Search Engine Optimizing (SEO) for the website. This doubled our users & page views of the website and gave BFM top listing on the most popularly used web search engines.

Despite being short of funds to hire a web developer for a complete website overhaul, we were able to upgrade our website through the generous donations of market supporters. We were able to get a deep discount from a professional photographer (and loyal market customer!) who created a photo library of market vendors and events. A vendor who is a media designer has volunteered his time and is using these photos to upgrade our website.

<http://bereafarmersmarket.org/>



TEXT MESSAGING: We experimented with a couple of bulk text messaging services. We began with FarmFan which allowed text recipients to check in at the market and earn points towards prizes like a free raffle ticket for farm to table events. Although we built up to over 100 subscribers and hoped to use this to track frequency of returning customers, less than 10 customers regularly checked in. When FarmFan increased their monthly fees, we changed to Trumpia which sends messages without a check-in option. Several customers stated they depended on these reminders to get to the market.

Create Targeted Newspaper and Radio Ads:

For a smooth transition to our new locations (when moving indoors in November and then outdoors in April) and to advertise our "Holiday Sale" in December, we did a burst of radio and newspaper advertising as well as flier and postcard distribution. Unlike other years when customer numbers dropped significantly with a change of venue, during the grant our customer counts remained steady or increased. Also, we had about a 50% increase in sales in December at our "Holiday Sale".

NEWSPAPER: We focused our advertising to local papers listing 40 ads in 2 local newspapers preceding significant events including the community planning meeting, each Second Saturday, each community meal, and each time we changed locations. We also submitted four press releases to local papers and had four photo essays featuring the market.

Richmond Register: 5 articles, 1 editorial about positive benefits of local food from the farmers market, 2 photo essays

Berea Citizen: BFM was featured in 11 articles, and twice in "Word From Berea Streets" where citizens gave their opinion about positive changes to the market.

Something for everyone at Berea Farmers Market

Critley King
cking@richmondregister.com

Seasons are changing in and around Madison County. With temperatures warming up, farmers market season is almost here.

As the winds turn warm and the sun begins to shine longer, stomachs are starting to crave fresh foods that can

only be obtained through the local farmer.

At the Berea Farmers Market (BFM), however, those fresh commodities can be obtained year round due to the adoption of an outdoors to indoors spring/winter location rotation.

The market, which began in the 1970s and just celebrated its 40th year, has

greatly flourished since its early days. During peak season, BFM boasts a whopping 40 vendors and can see anywhere from 300-350 visitors per Saturday, with off season seeing approximately 100-130 visitors.

"We went from just having produce vendors, when we started, to having baked and

See MARKET, A3



REGISTER FILE PHOTO

Bill Hall discusses the price of onions with a worker of Lazy Eight Stock Farm at the Berea Farmers Market last year. Currently, the Berea Farmers Market can be visited at its winter location in Churchill Weavers and is open Saturday 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

MARKET

Continued from page A1

dry goods and meat," said Market Manager Margie Stelzer. "We also have artisans who do fine handcrafts such as wearable art and pottery. We have been around so long we have a good base. I think we have a wide variety."

Some of the most unique products Stelzer says she has seen over the years include products by an herbalist vendor as well as the fiber arts made from alpaca hair from Owsley Fork Farm.

BFM will soon make the move from their winter location at Churchill Weavers at 100 Churchill Court, Berea, to 416 Chestnut Street, Berea, which is a grassy lot next to the empty People's Bank.

Stelzer added that she wanted to thank People's Bank for their generosity in giving the BFM somewhere to go and set up this summer.

Currently the location switch day is

set for April 9, and there will be a celebration the market is calling Spring Outdoors. Stelzer said that the event would feature children's activities, guest chefs with cooking demonstrations, and live music.

A monthly second Saturday celebration event has also been added thanks to funding through a special grant via the USDA, according to Stelzer.

Stelzer said that over the past few years the focus has been on making the market a place for everyone. This has included reaching out to low-income families. Part of this work has been accomplished through various grants and funding.

"We want to get people who are in need the freshest, most nutrient dense foods available," said Stelzer.

According to Stelzer, three years ago the market began accepting EBT, and in the summer of 2014, they received funding through WellCare Health Systems to start the Double Dollar program.

The program allows individuals who

receive EBT, S.N.A.P. (Supplemental Nutritional Assistant Program), WIC or Senior Vouchers, to double their "food dollars." EBT can be doubled up to \$10 and can be used to purchase food and food growing plants and seeds.

Senior vouchers, which are funded through the USDA, can be obtained through the Madison County Extension Office. Applicants must be 60 years of age, and must meet the income criteria of being equal to or less than the poverty level of 185 percent, according to Madison County S.N.A.P. Assistant Cheri Stacy. Stelzer said these vouchers could be doubled from \$4 to \$8, along with WIC.

"It is really simple," Stelzer explained. "The person presents say a \$4 dollar voucher to the farmer/vendor and he will give them \$8 worth of food."

Stelzer said that often during the summer, children sometimes go hungry because school is out and free lunches are not available. But she is excited to say that BFM has partnered with Grow Appalachia and the Neighborhood Food

Project to be a summer feeding site every Saturday in June and July.

During that time, children 18 years and under can come and get a free meal.

"On those Saturdays we will have more kid's activities, and cooking demonstrations specifically for kid friendly meals," said Stelzer, who added that there had also been funding received that would allow the kids to obtain \$2 tokens on those weekends. "They get a free meal and also something to take home."

Currently the BFM can be visited at its winter location in Churchill Weavers and is open every Saturday 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. As of April 9, the spring location at 416 Chestnut will be open Tuesdays from 3-6 p.m. and Saturdays 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

For more information visit BereaFarmersMarket.org or call Margie Stelzer, Market Manager, at 859-626-0383.

EDITOR'S NOTE: This is the first in a series highlighting the three farmers markets in Madison County.

In addition, we continually leveraged free promotional opportunities including a regular spot in the free "Community News" sections of the two Madison County papers, the Richmond Register and the Berea Citizen, as well as in our regional newspaper, the Lexington Herald Leader. Berea Tourism and partners' newsletters also regularly mention the BFM.

RADIO ADS: The BFM advertised on both public and commercial radio stations. We also took advantage of community service spots in both broadcast mediums. See "Partners" under Activities Section, Activity 1.1.1.

- WEKU Underwriting during morning and evening commutes Thursday, Friday and Sat. mornings. 24 spots in summer 2014. Because of its success BFM expanded to 130 spots the following summer.
- 30 spots with a Local Radio Station for "Salute to Small Businesses" Wallingford Broadcasting Company

Signage and Community Boards

Previous to the grant, BFM had 4 well-worn yard signs and an out-dated banner. Signage is important because we have no permanent vending space which requires us to frequently relocate. Through the grant, we purchased large signs with easy to read lettering. Many people remarked

that they found the market after seeing the signs. EBT customers reported coming to the market because it was advertised on the sign. We also purchased tall feather banners that we put up each market day and created smaller signs to direct people to our market booth and Sprout's Club.



Print Materials

FLYERS, POSTCARDS: Event Flyers and postcards were distributed regularly through approximately 40 community partners and businesses, plus 3 visitors' centers. Sprouts Club fliers were digitally distributed to key partners as well as reached 600+ homes through inclusion in local elementary school folders. (Also see 1.3.1. Outreach to Low Income)

Other:

The Berea Farmers Market was featured in a podcast called "Mighty Fine Farm and Food" broadcast out of Louisville that celebrates local sustainable food & farming in Kentucky. The BFM was also listed on a variety of on-line directories for local food including the USDA Farmers Market Directory, the Kentucky Department of Agriculture "Kentucky Proud" website, Agrilicious, Soil Make, Bon Appetit Appalachia and Craigslist.

Activity 1.1.2 Eat Local 101 Education.

Despite Appalachia being rooted in a rich history of sustenance farming and kitchen gardens, the skills of growing and cooking food have largely been lost to a diet of convenience and restaurant foods. The common complaints about buying fresh, local food are cost and lack of knowledge about preparation. When BFM began accepting EBT, Farmers Market Nutrition Program(FMPN) Vouchers and partnering with WellCare Health Plans, a Kentucky Medicaid Health Care Provider, market vendors began seeing more people with a desire to eat more healthily and seeking information on how to do it. This grant helped the market gather existing resources as well as create new ones to provide targeted outreach on eating healthy local foods.

PARTNER MATERIALS AND DISPLAYS ON EATING HEALTHILY: In addition to using materials from partner organizations like recipe cards from the University Extension Office, BFM created a brochure, "Eating Well on a Budget" which outlined strategies, programs and

support for BFM customers. (See Producer Market Manual included with this report). These brochures were made available at the market and distributed to target populations. (Also see Activity 1.2.1 for BFM designed recipe cards and 1.3.1. for more about distribution of the materials)

ON-SITE COOKING

DEMONSTRATIONS: Drawing from a wealth of cooking talent from our vendors and customers while also recruiting new chefs, BFM sponsored monthly cooking demonstrations that coincided with our Second Saturday Celebration. Chefs used local products, cooked on-site and offered samples. We purchased small equipment for the demos, including a small tent, 2 tables, hand and dish washing stations, 2 portable butane cooktops, cups/sampling materials, disinfectant soaps, cleaners and paper towels and waste, recycling and compost bins.

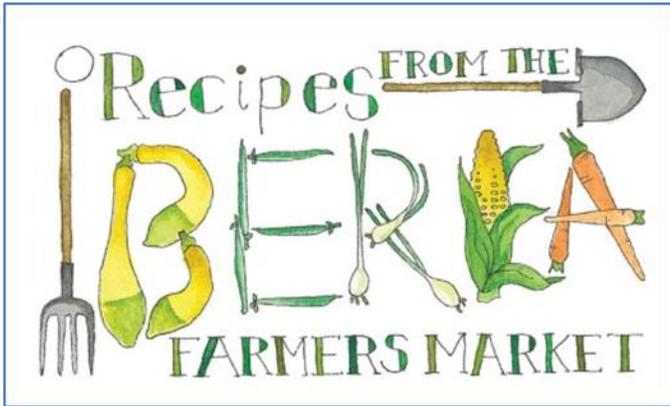


Demonstrations included:

- Root Vegetable Pancakes topped with Ramp Aioli and fresh greens
- Fermentation demonstration
- Black Bean Veggie Burgers on a bed of greens with creamy herb and garlic dressing
- “Cooking With Your Kids”-red, white and blue parfaits and a Squash Blossom Pesto
- Ratatouille
- Quinoa and vegetable salad
- “Bunny Sandwiches” (shredded vegetables in flavored cream cheese)
- Tomato Brochette and tomato tasting of a wide variety of local tomatoes
- Packing brown bag lunches using farm fresh food.

The goal was to encourage people to use fresh in-season products, sometimes in new ways-in simple, cost effective food preparation.

Activity 1.2.1 Know your Farmer.



With the help of writers from the Berea Writing Circle and volunteers from a local service club, the BFM wrote profiles for most of its vendors. These profiles were paired with photos of the vendors that were then used in social media, the weekly e-newsletter, and a slideshow at the Community Meal. A volunteer graphic designer created 3X5 recipe cards using these vendor photos and biographies and pairing them with a recipe that highlights the vendor's product. The front and back cover designs were created by a

BFM vendor watercolorist and were laminated, hole punched and strung onto book rings. Customers gathered the hole-punched recipe cards directly from the vendors increasing traffic to their booth and connecting consumers to their business and products.

EKU honors students also interviewed vendors and, although they were not completed by the conclusion of the grant, the oral histories have been submitted into the ECU archives.

Bill Best

Bill Best is the founding member of the Berea Farmers Market who began meeting in the early 1970s with a handful of other local farmers. He also is the current director of the Sustainable Mountain Agriculture Center, which focuses on maintaining the genetic heritage of vegetables and fruits. He received the "Kentucky Master Conservationist" award in 1997, the Southern Foodways Alliance "Keeper of the Flame" award in 2003 for his work with heirloom fruits and vegetables. He has been featured in newspapers, magazines and professional publications, been spotlighted in several films and videos and has authored or edited numerous books. Along with his sons, grandsons and interns, he farms several acres of tomatoes, beans and other produce.



Shuck Beans/ Leather Britches

Soak a pint of shuck beans (about three pounds of green beans) overnight (8 p.m. - 8 a.m.) and then pour the water off.

Soak again from 8 a.m. until noon and then pour water off once again. Soak through the noon hour and pour the water off a third time.

Then cook rehydrated beans until done using ham hock, side meat, or bacon. Salt to taste. New potatoes may be added as the beans near being done. Vegetarians might season with olive oil.

FARMER NAME TAGS: Coordinating with a local business and artist, attractive wooden name tags were created for each full member of the BFM. The nametags were mounted on either a magnet or pin with the pin being far superior in its ability to stay attached. Members were allowed to purchase additional name tags at cost, with many taking advantage of this opportunity.

Activity 1.2.2. Second Saturdays Promotions. 5 times annually May -Sept

By far, the best addition to our market was the institution of Second Saturday Celebrations. Modeled after "First Friday" public events held across the country, the market created a community space that attracted a wider range of consumers. These Second Saturday events took

place during a regular market day, but were expanded to encourage the use of local foods through education, experience and community building. Each event had a theme and included cooking demonstrations (See Activity 1.1.2), seasonal tastings and children’s activities (See Activity 1.2.3). We also hired musicians and partnered with local performers and wellness providers to offer entertainment and creative movement opportunities.

2015 Season Second Saturday Events:



April: *“Spring Outdoors”*

We highlighted spring plants and produce by helping children plant tomato seeds in compostable pots and hosting a cooking demonstration featuring seasonal vegetables. Sustainable Berea launched their “Victory Garden” raised bed project and the “Neighborhood Food Project” demonstrated how to grow a container garden in recycled wooden pallets. Musicians kept us moving and warm on this brisk day.

May: *“Mother’s Day”*

We honored mothers and ushered in Spring where kids created cards using pictures from seed

catalogues, a local chef provided a fermentation workshop, Morris Dancers performed traditional dances and musicians entertained the crowds.

June: *“Pollinators”*

Kids learned about beneficial insects and how they are essential to fruit production. A local wellness coach demonstrated how to make black bean burgers and a farmer/musician kept things cool.

July: *“Tomato Fest”*

The Extension office hosted a tomato tasting of a wide variety of tomatoes that were available at the market that week. A local chef demonstrated how to make a ratatouille and kids learned about healthful eating. Musicians kept the mood festive.

August: *“Eat Healthy, Pack Local”*

The Extension Office prepared kid-friendly and easy-to-pack, healthful dips for using with fresh cut market vegetables. Children learned about parts of plants and how they relate to the human body. A local singer-songwriter kept us mellow with his original tunes.

2016 Season Second Saturday Events:

April: *“Spring Outdoors”*

We launched our outdoor season with food & activities of spring. The extension office sampled a Spring recipe and a local day care brought spring activities for the kids.

May: *“Gardening”*

We helped customers connect with their food sources by offering free vegetable seeds for home gardens and by teaching kids how to plant seeds in easily transplantable containers. Glean Madison County distributed seeds for the “Plant a Row” project where home

gardeners' plant a row for the hungry. A local Wellness coach demonstrated how to make a quinoa and vegetable salad that can be adapted for each season.

June: *"Feeding Your Family"*

We gave tips & demonstrations for using farmers' market food to feed a family on a budget. A local home cook showed how to quickly turn season vegetables into kid-friendly "Bunny Sandwiches".

July: *"Tomato Fest"*

Back by popular demand, we again hosted a tomato fest that included a tomato tasting hosted by the Extension office and a cooking demonstration of quick & easy recipes like tomato brochette.

August: *"Back to School"*

Tips for packing brown bag lunches with farm fresh food.

Community Meal:



Each September BFM collaborated with the city-wide, day long "Celebrate the Harvest" festival to host a farm-to-table Community Meal. With the event located near the new Urban Agriculture District, the Community Meal was the culmination of the day's events. In partnership with local chefs, the board planned a menu sourced from our vendors' products. The first year we kept it simple with an old fashioned Kentucky Burgoo and a vegetarian Ratatouille. Church groups and individuals loaned plates and cutlery to decrease plastic waste.

In an effort to increase interest in the meal the second year, the BFM partnered with a well-known local restaurateur and created a menu of barbeque featuring pasture-raised pork, chicken and beef from the market's two meat vendors. A vegetarian sandwich was crafted from roasted seasonal vegetables, and a selection of side dishes was made from the abundance of seasonally available produce from the vendors. Local restaurants were

recruited to prepare side dishes and sauces for the event. Community response to the quantity and quality of the food was overwhelmingly positive.

At the meal, dishes were labeled with the sources of the ingredients, helping to connect the various parts of the meal to the farmers who provided the products.

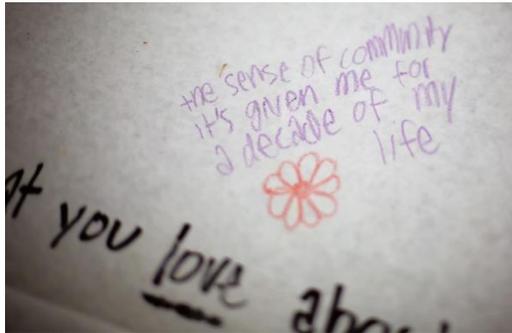
Increasing knowledge of the market vendors was added the second year. A slideshow, prepared by a volunteer, was on display near the dessert table, and in view of the serving line. The slides featured photos and stories of our market farmers. Also, several vendors shared their



experiences as artists and farmers during the program portion of meal.

Both years, we had programming where we shared highlights of the year, honored a local food leader with our “Bill Best Local Food Leader” award and recognized our volunteer of the year. The second year we had an address from the mayor of Berea and folk dancing lead by the Berea College Country Dancers.

Volunteer involvement in the events was a wonderful way to incorporate community members who love the market, but don't normally have an outlet to contribute to the workings of the market. Volunteers helped to set up and dress tables and chairs. Volunteers stocked the serving line and dished up desserts. The local Boy and Girl Scout troops were invaluable in clean up!



Feedback on the market was collected through a public comment portion of the program. Customers were invited to provide written comments on the paper table covers with provided crayons.

Activity 1.2.3 Sprouts Club

We began a “Sprouts Club” inviting any children at the market who wanted to participate. Each club day we had hands-on learning activities about health, wellness, farming and sustainability. We originally planned to only host the club once a month as part of our Second Saturday Celebrations but volunteer enthusiasm helped us expand that to several times a month. We were able to leverage funds from WellCare Health Systems to purchase a canopy and to fund tokens so that each child participant received \$2 of market tokens to spend at the market.



In 2016, we became an USDA Summer Food Service Program designated site (SFSP). 332 meals were served at the Farmers Market, serving on average 30 meals/30 kids a day. The most meals served in one day was 40 meals on July 2nd.

Because the market offered a free lunch for kids, value added food from our vendors and activities provided by SFSP workers, partners and our Sprouts Club, the market became a place that families could eat, play and relax together. As numbers grew, we created a

family gathering space so that nursing mothers could be comfortable, small children could play safely and families could visit. This created community, exposed young people to a healthy local food economy and created connections with producers.

“The Farmers Market was one of our most successful sites this summer and we look forward to working with you again next summer!” – Alex Burke of the USDA Summer Food Service Program

During the grant, we sponsored 26 Sprouts Club activities:

- Easter egg hunt and tomato planting workshop
- Roots, leaves, fruits: What part of the plant do we eat?
- Worms: Live worms to hold and learn about how they work
- Upcycled Mother’s Day cards
- Leaf & Flower printing
- All About Insects: harmful and beneficial insects
- Herb workshop: touch, feel, and smell
- Bird feeder workshop with bird calls
- Be a Bee: dressed up as a bee to pollinate a flower and learn why bees are important
- Cooking with edible flowers: Yogurt parfaits & daylily pesto
- Thumbprint bug Art
- Berea Fire Dpt. brought a fire truck and taught kids about fire safety.
- Activities about food groups
- Squash planting workshop
- Bicycle Rodeo
- Sandbox treasure hunt, face painting and art projects
- Decorated and took home a container garden
- How to make “Bunny Sandwiches”
- Nature Art
- Pop-up Playground using cardboard boxes, duct tape, rope & all kinds of odds & ends
- Library Bookmobile



Activity 1.3.1: Outreach to low income/marginalized communities

PRINT INFORMATION ON EBT WITH TARGETED OUTREACH: The BFM created fliers and postcards advertising EBT and double dollars at the BFM. We distributed these to food banks, a liquor store, a local campground, Peddlers Mall, Berea College Campus, Head Start and the school backpack program. BFM also created packets for WIC customers which included the BFM “Eating on a Budget” brochure, Kentucky Produce Availability Guide and a map to the BFM printed on the envelope.



Activity 1.3.2. Build and retain low income customer base.

We implemented several new ways of welcoming customers. We used our chalkboards to highlight daily activities or direct them to special events. We purchased signs to direct people to the Manager’s Booth for EBT and credit card sales and to our Sprouts Club tent for children’s activities. We experimented with training hospitality volunteers from the ECU Dietetics Program and UK Extension Agency Master Gardeners to help guide new customers through the market (see Accomplishments for Activity 3.3.2) However, we found well trained and welcoming vendors provided the support needed to help shoppers negotiate the new experience.

By far, we had the most success at building and retaining low income customers by offering financial incentives for shopping at our farmers market. Besides accepting EBT, WIC and Senior FMNSP vouchers, we also doubled their value through a double dollars program. We increased advertising about our double dollars program, targeted its distribution to low income consumers and saw an increase in nutritional support program sales by 32% from before the grant. (See Activity 1.3.1)

Our low income sales were significantly affected by our access to double dollar funding. When we started offering double dollars, our low income sales transactions took a leap from 209 before the grant to 709 by the end of year one. In year two, we had several interruptions in double dollar funding as grants were depleted and fund raising slumped so we had a decrease in the total number of transactions for that year.

Because of the impact double dollar funding has on our ability to attract and retain low income customers, we made it a priority to advocate for a more secure funding source for all Kentucky farmers markets. Grant funds made it possible for the BFM market manager to travel around the state to build support for double dollars programs. The market manager presented to the board of

directors for a Medicaid provider for the state of Kentucky, testified in front of the Kentucky State House Committee on Agriculture and was a guest speaker at a Kentucky State Conference for Local Government Leaders. Because of the success of the BFM double dollars program and the advocacy work we were able to do with grant funding, we have become a valued member of a coalition of non-profit and governmental organizations who, through the award of a USDA FINI grant, are creating a statewide double dollars program.

I've loved every second of the Farmers Market! I came here about a year and a half ago, and Saturday mornings are always my favorite day of the week. What you guys do is beautiful and awesome. Thank you for it!
—Respondent to 2017 Community Survey

Goal #2: Developing and improving producer market opportunities

This second goal focused on equipping producers with the tools necessary to run successful markets and on expanding and diversifying a reliable supply of goods. Below are the various ways the BFM connected producers to resources and our winter sales numbers reflect the success of those activities. 93% of the vendors surveyed thought that the FMPP helped improve their market opportunities and 67% saw their sales grow between the first and second years of the grant.

The year prior to the grant, we lost one of our biggest winter producers and our sales numbers reflected that. Sales from January to March of 2014 were just \$2,323.25. Over the grant period, several farmers were connected to grants and training (see Activity 2.2.1) and sales climbed. The last year of the grant, our winter sales increased to \$16,019.00, a whopping 590% increase from baseline showing that the FMPP funding significantly improved our year round production.

Activity 2.1.1. Producer Marketing Manual

Using information from area farmers market as well as on-line resources, we completed a producer manual aimed at all levels of producers that provides new and expanding producers resources for improved marketing skills from basic “How to Get Started” to Value added processing and certifications. It also contains information about the Berea Farmers Market Grower-Only policies, the Kentucky Department of Agriculture farmers’ market regulations and Department of Health regulations for vending at our market with links for more detailed information. Included is a reference page with links to support organizations for farmers, webinars to improve their marketing and how to grow their business.

A print version of the manual was distributed at the beginning of the year Vendor Meeting and an electronic copy is available on the website. Extra manuals were printed to be distributed to new vendors as they join the market.

We have heard that navigating the administration and regulations for many vendors is overwhelming and or intimidating. Many producers just want to farm! The manual has increased the capacity and ability of producers to professionalize and extend their offerings in a peer learning network (see next). 40% of the vendors surveyed found the market manual helpful in connecting them with resources and information to help their businesses grow.

Activity 2.1.2. Producer Peer Learning

MONTHLY MEMBER NEWLETTER: Creating channels for peer to peer learning was by far the most challenging goal to accomplish of the grant. We initially thought that a monthly member newsletter might be the best way to share information within the BFM but did not get member buy-in to this idea due to the limited access to internet and time to both contribute to and supply the information. At the strategic planning meeting at the end of Year One of the grant, we revisited this goal to reassess how vendors preferred to share information. We then formulated two new activities to meet the vision of the goal.

One activity was to purchase a bulletin board for the market for posting upcoming farming workshops, conferences, funding opportunities or other information that farmers wanted to share. Although the bulletin board was kept current by the market manager and was viewed by vendors, it was not used by vendors for peer to peer information sharing.



The other activity was to organize a series of farm visits. Five farmers volunteered to host farm tours and a spring and summer series was launched. But, after two poorly attended events, the remaining farmers were reluctant to put in the effort that was needed to host a subsequent tour so the series was canceled.

What the vendor survey revealed was that by far the best way for vendors to share information was through informal conversations at the market. 93% surveyed thought that these conversations helped them connect with information or resources that helped their business grow. We are proud of our cooperative model and our open and friendly atmosphere that fosters this free sharing of information among our vendors.

MARKET MISSIONS: Each year of the grant, representatives for the BFM traveled to one farmers market similar in size and mission as ours. We went when the market was in operation so that we could talk to a wide variety of vendors and observe how the market operates. We also arranged a meeting with the market manager to learn more about the behind the scenes operations of the markets. 53% of the vendors surveyed thought this connected them to information or resources that helped their business grow.

Somerset Farmers Market: A group of 4 vendors and the market manager traveled to Somerset, KY which has a popular downtown market. The farmers market is located in a bigger town than Berea with more customers, a prime location and a city well behind them. This motivated members to search out new sponsorships both with private businesses and local government.

Community Farmers

Market: Four vendors and the market manager traveled to Bowling Green, KY to visit the Community Farmers Market. Although the town of Bowling Green is more populated than Berea, the mission of the market is similar to the BFM. We met with the outreach coordinator and the market manager to discuss



leadership structure, decision making, how they purchased their building, vendor fees and volunteer recruitment. Some of their ideas for more deeply engaging vendors in the work of the market and on-site donation jars were immediately implemented at BFM with positive outcomes.

Activity 2.2.1. Producer Training and Education

During the grant period we connected vendors with training and education aimed at expanding and diversifying their products including value added certifications and resources that helped farmers extend their growing season. The grant provided funding for 4 micro processing certifications to increase their value added production and for 2 vendors to participate in an organic market gardening workshop. Also during the course of the FMPP grant, several farmers were connected to state grants to begin high tunnel production and one baker vendor received a grant to fund a commercial kitchen. While not directly related to FMPP grant funding, the overall strengthening of the market and producers through the USDA FMPP grant, enabled and empowered us to proactively seek and take advantage of other grant opportunities.

This increase in winter production gave customers assurance of regular availability of product and maintained a more stable base of customers. With a reliable customer base, more vendors joined the cold weather market so that our vendor numbers increased from 10 to 18 for those slowest production months. This was a WIN WIN for both customers and producers.

Goal #3: Ensure effective sustainable market support

The third goal of the grant was to improve market functioning by creating credible and transparent planning and reporting strategies, equipping staff and volunteers with the tools necessary to run successful markets and establishing partnerships with other organizations to leverage resources. Vendors and the board saw a measurable improvement in the functioning of market with one long-time vendor exclaiming, “The functioning of the market is hugely better than just a few years ago!”

Activity 3.1.1: Annual Workplan Development

Planning for the implementation of grant goals began with a community meeting where stakeholders from public and private non-profits, churches, farmers, artisans and market customers gathered to brainstorm ideas for accomplishing the objectives. In addition, the BFM facilitated strategic planning meetings open to the board and vendor members to channel these ideas into an actionable plan. The outreach coordinator and program manager then refined the plan with monthly goals and a calendar with target and actual dates of completion of activities. Although producers and community members were very involved with the implementation of the goals of the grant and even took on some leadership roles, especially with the Community Meal, most of the work plan direction and implementations came from the Market/Project Manager and Outreach Coordinator.

Thanks to the mentorship of a seasoned grant manager and of a skilled facilitator of strategic planning, by the completion of the grant, the market manager had gained the skills to successfully facilitate a restructuring of the cooperative so that future planning and leadership is collectively shared among board, those working with the market and vendor members. This enabled BFM to continue much of the work of the outreach coordinator after funding for the position expired at the conclusion of the grant.

During the second year of the grant, BFM leveraged funding through Kentucky Center for Agriculture and Rural Development (KCARD) for a feasibility study for a permanent structure for the market. BFM is now engaging in long term visioning and formulating three year budget projections as we work towards a goal of a permanent market location and structure.

Activity 3.1.2.Hiring of part time Outreach Coordinator

Because of the important role of this position in implementing the grant activities, a committee was formed including Board and community members. A job description was refined and disseminated in local venues and channels. Nine finalists were interviewed during a screening process and the committee then made a recommendation to the Board to hire the project outreach coordinator. She worked closely with the project manager to create annual work plans, work with low income residents, implement our marketing plan, coordinate Second Saturdays, oversee the annual Community Meals, volunteer recruitment and management and building community partners.

Activity 3.1.3. Monitoring and Evaluation

A pro-bono Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) specialist worked closely with the PM to develop an M&E plan that included performance metrics, baseline and ongoing monitoring instruments. A volunteer bookkeeper helped support the project management and BFM Treasurer in tracking financial and performance metrics throughout the grant period. An outreach and dissemination plan was defined from the outset for regular reporting of results, including this final report which will be made available to community partners and other stakeholders.

PLEASE SEE PP. 29-31 FOR METRICS TABLES

Activity 3.2.1. Business and Strategic planning training

The BFM incorporated strategic planning sessions and annual work plans to accomplish the goals of the grant. (See Activity 3.1.1) We also did some focused work on creating policies and procedures to clarify and strengthen the board processes, vendor expectations and market identity. (See Activity 3.2.3)

Activity 3.2.2. Volunteer Plan and Management

During the course of the grant, we recruited over 120 volunteers to help with short and long term projects. Many of our volunteers were from Berea College and EKU as part of their course studies. We also had success working with scouting groups for one time projects like our Community Dinner. Some projects, like our Sprouts Club, we handed over to partner organizations who then recruited and managed their own workers. Loyal BFM customers were by far our most dedicated and reliable volunteers and have returned year after year.

At the market site, we tracked volunteer numbers and hours with sign-in sheets. Work done outside market hours or managed by other agencies was much more difficult to track. Our metrics for volunteer numbers and hours are low estimates. The scope of our accomplishments shows that all this work could never have been completed with just two paid part-time contractors.

We originally thought it would be useful to have one or two hospitality volunteers to welcome and orient new customers to the market, especially those who may not have shopped at a farmers markets before. Because of the open set-up of the market with no real entrance or exit, it was difficult for our volunteers to spot or engage new customers. Most of that orientation was done if customers approached the manager's booth.

Our most successful, long-term volunteers were those who operated the market booth so we focused our training materials on those duties. We created a manual for guidance and troubleshooting of booth operations which was used for orientation and always kept on-site at the booth. See BFM Volunteer Manual included with this report.

Activity 3.2.3 Develop Market Manual

During the two years of the grant, the board and contractors did some focused work on creating policies and procedures to clarify and strengthen the board processes, vendor expectations and market identity. These policies and procedures were gathered into one document that was printed, bound and distributed to board members and the market manager. There also is an electronic copy for vendors as well as a print copy kept at the market. The manual was bound in a three ring binder for ease of updating and editing. The complete manual is submitted with this report.

Activity 3.3.3. Formalize Partnerships

A partner mapping was created in the first interim of the grant with outreach to new partners. The Outreach Coordinator identified groups and agencies with mutual interest and shared goals. Below is list of organizations with whom we partnered. They are divided into two main categories, those made up or targeting low income residents and those with mutual interests and shared goals. More details about specific activities with partner organizations are included in the “Activities” section of this report.

Organizations made up or targeting low income residents:

Presentations

- *Berea College EcoVillage
- *EKU Education Pays
- *Grow 'n' Learn Day Care
- *Head Start at the Berea
- *Intergenerational Center
- *Berea College “Dinner on the Grounds”
- *Morgan Street Housing Authority
- *WellCare Health Systems Board of Directors
- *Kentucky State House Committee on Agriculture
- *Kentucky State Conference for Local Government Leaders

Meetings

- *Church on the Rock
- *EKU Colonels Cupboard (food bank for students)
- *Federation of Housing Enterprises (FAHE)
- *Section8 Housing Program
- *WIC of Madison County

Shared Activities

- *Berea Food Bank
- *Berea Community School
- *Berea Sr. Cit. Center
- *Bluegrass Farm to Table
- *Summer Food Project
- *CELTS Student Volunteers
- *Community Farm Alliance
- *Madison County
- *Department of Health
- *Glean Madison County
- *Grow Appalachia
- *Madison County Public Library Lunch Bunch Program
- *Neighborhood Food Project
- *White House Clinic
- *WellCare Health Plans, Inc.



Organizations with mutual interests and shared goals

Presentations

- *Berea College Local Food Systems Classes
- *Bright Beginnings Daycare
- *Berea City Council
- *EKU Local Foods Class
- *Kiwanis Club
- *Lions Club
- *Madison Co. Health and Wellness Network
- *Sustainable Agriculture & Food Systems Funders

Meetings

- *EKU Small Business Development Center

Shared Activities

- *Academic Year in America (AYA)
- *AmeriCorp
- *Berea Fire Dpt.
- *Boy Scouts
- *Broadway Body Works
- *Berea Writers Circle
- *Cedar Haven Wellness & Arts Ctr.
- *Eastern KY Asset. Bldg. Coalition
- *Foley's Florist

- *Kiwanis Club
- *Kentucky Center For Agriculture and Rural Development(KCARD)
- *EKU Dietetics Department
- *EKU Ag. Department
- *Girl Scouts
- *Lions Club
- *Madison Co. Health Dept.
- *UK Ext. Services
- *Madison Co. Pub. Library
- *Mike's Hike and Bike
- *Personal Journey Wellness

| USDA FMPP QUARTERLY REPORT 2016 | | | | | | | | |
|---|---------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|-------------|---------------------------------|-------------------|--------------------|-------------|
| | 1ST QUARTER (OCT - DEC 2013-15) | | | | 2ND QUARTER (JAN - MAR 2014-16) | | | |
| GOAL 1: CONSUMER DEMAND | Baseline | Year 1 | Year 2 | % CHANGE * | Baseline | Year 1 | Year 2 | % CHANGE |
| A. Customer Count: Total | N.A. | 1728 | 2396 | 39% | N.A. | 891 | 1456 | 63% |
| LOW INCOME TRANSACTIONS | 0 | 114 | 86 | -25% | \$0 | 67 | 37 | -45% |
| B. Vendor Sales: Total | \$14,360.50 | \$17,463.90 | \$23,476.86 | 63% | \$2,323.25 | \$8,315.50 | \$16,019.00 | 590% |
| LOW INCOME: Total | \$0 | \$2,103 | \$1,502 | -29% | \$0 | \$1,690 | \$844 | -50% |
| EBT | \$0 | \$2,103 | \$1,534 | -27% | \$0 | \$1,690 | \$844 | -50% |
| SR. VOUCHER | \$0 | \$0 | \$16 | N.A. | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | 0% |
| WIC | \$0 | \$0 | \$24 | N.A. | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | 0% |
| GOAL 2: IMPROVED MARKET OPP. | | | | | | | | |
| A. Vendor Attendance: Total * | 158 | 146 | 182 | 15% | 46 | 97 | 121 | 163% |
| Artisans | 33 | 41 | 51 | 55% | 22 | 24 | 30 | 36% |
| Farmers | 125 | 81 | 114 | -9% | 24 | 50 | 64 | 167% |
| Both | 0 | 24 | 30 | 25% | 0 | 23 | 29 | 26% |
| Unique Vendors: Total * | 20 | 18 | 21 | 5% | 10 | 13 | 18 | 80% |
| Artisans | 4 | 3 | 7 | 75% | 2 | 3 | 4 | 100% |
| Farmers | 7 | 11 | 11 | 57% | 6 | 7 | 9 | 50% |
| Both | 0 | 4 | 5 | 25% | 2 | 3 | 5 | 150% |
| B. Producer Trainings: Total Mtgs | N.A. | 0 | 1 | | N.A. | 6 | 3 | -50% |
| Total Served | N.A. | 0 | 19 | | N.A. | 26 | 30 | 15% |
| Farmers Mkt. Meetings | N.A. | 0 | 1 | | N.A. | 2 | 1 | -50% |
| Producer Cont. Education | N.A. | 0 | 0 | | N.A. | 2 | 0 | -100% |
| Certifications | N.A. | 0 | 0 | | N.A. | 3 | 2 | -33% |
| C. Facebook | | | | | | | | |
| Total Likes | N.A. | 1405 | 1,802 | 28% | N.A. | 1477 | 1953 | 32% |
| Total Monthly Post Reach | N.A. | 128 | 26,598 | 20680% | N.A. | 638 | 25161 | 3844% |
| D. Website | | | | | | | | |
| USERS | N.A. | N.A. | 1,150 | | N.A. | 360 | 791 | 120% |
| PAGEVIEWS | N.A. | N.A. | 1,599 | | N.A. | 863 | 1280 | 48% |
| E. Newsletter | | | | | | | | |
| Subscribers | N.A. | 167 | 312 | 87% | N.A. | 214 | 431 | 101% |
| Opens | N.A. | 209 | 1,048 | 401% | N.A. | 803 | 1403 | 75% |
| Clicks | N.A. | 7 | 43 | 514% | N.A. | 74 | 128 | 73% |
| F. Sprouts Club | | | | | | | | |
| Attendance | | | | | | | | |
| GOAL 3: EFFECTIVE MKT. SUPPORT FUNCTIONS | | | | | | | | |
| A. Volunteers: Total | 0 | 8 | 56 | 600% | 0 | 38 | 59 | 55% |
| New Volunteers | 0 | 0 | 2 | N.A. | 0 | 30 | 3 | -90% |
| Hours Worked | 0 | 20 | 9 | -55% | 0 | 20 | 10 | -50% |
| B. Partners: Total | 2 | 18 | 48 | 167% | 2 | 21 | 50 | 138% |
| New Partners | 0 | 0 | 2 | N.A. | 0 | 3 | 1 | -67% |
| Meetings | 0 | 0 | 20 | N.A. | 0 | 5 | 16 | 220% |
| Joint Activities | 0 | 0 | 0 | N.A. | 0 | 4 | 0 | -100% |

*Over baseline when available. Otherwise, over year 1.

| | 3RD QUARTER (APR - JUNE 2014-16) | | | | 4TH QUARTER (JULY - SEPT 2014-16) | | | |
|--|----------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|-------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|-------------|
| GOAL 1: CONSUMER DEMAND | Baseline | Year 1 | Year 2 | % CHANGE | Baseline | Year 1 | Year 2 | % CHANGE |
| A. Customer Count: Total | N.A. | 4102 | 6306 | 54% | N.A. | 6251 | 6968 | 11% |
| LOW INCOME TRANSACTIONS | 1 | 235 | 176 | 17500% | 208 | 317 | 188 | -10% |
| B. Vendor Sales: Total | \$24,082.51 | \$39,183.86 | \$60,565.35 | 151% | \$48,521.45 | \$51,630.90 | \$59,228.03 | 22% |
| LOW INCOME: Total | \$8 | \$4,508 | \$3,852 | 48050% | \$4,849 | \$6,037 | \$4,253 | -12% |
| EBT | \$0 | \$3,229 | \$3,756 | 16% | \$4,497 | \$5,061 | \$3,213 | -29% |
| SR. VOUCHER | \$8 | \$376 | \$8 | 0% | \$352 | \$480 | \$752 | 114% |
| WIC | \$0 | \$264 | \$88 | | \$0 | \$496 | \$288 | -42% |
| GOAL 2: IMPROVED MARKET OPP. | 1 | | | | | | | |
| A. Vendor Attendance: Total * | 223 | 282 | 282 | 0% | 281 | 229 | 290 | 27% |
| Artisans | 64 | 48 | 36 | -25% | 45 | 39 | 30 | -23% |
| Farmers | 155 | 205 | 215 | 5% | 272 | 195 | 241 | 24% |
| Both | 4 | 42 | 32 | -24% | 35 | 21 | 19 | -10% |
| Unique Vendors: Total * | 24 | 24 | 26 | 8% | 18 | 23 | 30 | 30% |
| Artisans | 3 | 3 | 4 | 33% | 3 | 4 | 6 | 50% |
| Farmers | 17 | 18 | 19 | 6% | 13 | 16 | 20 | 25% |
| Both | 4 | 3 | 3 | 0% | 2 | 3 | 4 | 33% |
| B. Producer Trainings: Total Mtgs | N.A. | 0 | 1 | | N.A. | 1 | 0 | |
| Total Served | N.A. | 0 | 1 | | N.A. | 7 | 0 | |
| Farmers Mkt. Meetings | N.A. | 0 | 12 | | N.A. | 1 | 0 | |
| Producer Cont. Education | N.A. | 0 | 0 | | N.A. | 0 | 0 | |
| Certifications | N.A. | 0 | 0 | | N.A. | 0 | 0 | |
| C. Facebook | | | | | | | | |
| Total Likes | N.A. | 1649 | 2101 | 27% | N.A. | 1774 | 2334 | 32% |
| Total Monthly Post Reach | N.A. | 638 | 35356 | 5442% | N.A. | 12761 | 46442 | 264% |
| D. Website | | | | | | | | |
| USERS | N.A. | 2310 | 1503 | -35% | N.A. | 2255 | 762 | -66% |
| PAGEVIEWS | N.A. | 3685 | 2258 | -39% | N.A. | 2950 | 2131 | -28% |
| E. Newsletter | | | | | | | | |
| Subscribers | N.A. | 163 | 477 | 193% | N.A. | 303 | 515 | 70% |
| Opens | N.A. | 1508 | 1350 | -10% | N.A. | 905 | 1305 | 44% |
| Clicks | N.A. | 124 | 94 | -24% | N.A. | 29 | 168 | 479% |
| F. Sprouts Club | | | | | | | | |
| Attendance | 0 | 136 | 33 | -76% | 0 | 56 | 70 | 25% |
| GOAL 3: EFFECTIVE MKT. SUPPORT FUNCTIONS | | | | | | | | |
| A. Volunteers: Total | 0 | 46 | 74 | 61% | 0 | 58 | 122 | 110% |
| New Volunteers | 0 | 10 | 15 | 50% | 0 | 12 | 48 | 300% |
| Hours Worked | 0 | 78 | 87 | 12% | 0 | 58 | 152 | 161% |
| B. Partners: Total | 2 | 31 | 59 | 90% | 2 | 46 | 61 | 33% |
| New Partners | 0 | 11 | 8 | -27% | 2 | 15 | 6 | -60% |
| Meetings | 0 | 20 | 7 | -65% | 0 | 11 | 3 | -73% |
| Joint Activities | 0 | 9 | 3 | -67% | 1 | 7 | 7 | 0% |

| USDA FMPP Q | | YEARLY | | | |
|--|--|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|------------------------|
| GOAL 1: CONSUMER DEMAND | | Baseline | Year 1 | Year 2 | % CHANGE FROM BASELINE |
| A. Customer Count: Total | | N.A. | 12972 | 17126 | 32% |
| LOW INCOME TRANSACTIONS | | 209 | 733 | 487 | 133% |
| B. Vendor Sales: Total | | \$ 89,287.71 | \$116,594.16 | \$159,289.24 | 78% |
| LOW INCOME: Total | | \$4,857.00 | \$14,338.00 | \$10,451.00 | 115% |
| EBT | | \$4,497.00 | \$12,083.00 | \$9,347.00 | 108% |
| SR. VOUCHER | | \$360.00 | \$856.00 | \$776.00 | 116% |
| WIC | | \$0.00 | \$760.00 | \$400.00 | -47% |
| GOAL 2: IMPROVED MARKET OPP. | | | | | |
| A. Vendor Attendance: Total * | | 708 | 754 | 875 | 24% |
| Artisans | | 164 | 152 | 147 | -10% |
| Farmers | | 576 | 531 | 634 | 10% |
| Both | | 39 | 110 | 110 | 182% |
| Unique Vendors: Total * | | 32 | 32 | 34 | 6% |
| Artisans | | 5 | 4 | 6 | 20% |
| Farmers | | 23 | 22 | 23 | 0% |
| Both | | 4 | 6 | 5 | 25% |
| B. Producer Trainings: Total Mtgs | | N.A. | 7 | 5 | -29% |
| Total Served | | N.A. | 33 | 50 | 52% |
| Farmers Mkt. Meetings | | N.A. | 3 | 14 | 367% |
| Producer Cont. Education | | N.A. | 2 | 0 | -100% |
| Certifications | | N.A. | 3 | 2 | -33% |
| C. Facebook | | | | | |
| Total Likes | | 1200 | 1774 | 2334 | 95% |
| Total Monthly Post Reach | | N.A. | 14154 | 133557 | 844% |
| D. Website | | | | | |
| USERS | | N.A. | 4925 | 4206 | -15% |
| PAGEVIEWS | | N.A. | 7498 | 7268 | -3% |
| E. Newsletter | | | | 0 | |
| Subscribers | | 166 | 303 | 515 | 210% |
| Opens | | N.A. | 3425 | 5106 | 49% |
| Clicks | | N.A. | 234 | 433 | 85% |
| F. Sprouts Club | | | | | |
| Attendance | | 0 | 199 | 103 | -48% |
| GOAL 3: EFFECTIVE MKT. SUPPORT FUNCTIONS | | | | | |
| A. Volunteers: Total | | 0 | 58 | 122 | 110% |
| New Volunteers | | 0 | 58 | 64 | 10% |
| Hours Worked | | 0 | 176 | 258 | 47% |
| B. Partners: Total | | 2 | 46 | 61 | 2950% |
| New Partners | | 2 | 44 | 15 | 650% |
| Meetings | | 0 | 36 | 46 | 28% |
| Joint Activities | | 1 | 20 | 10 | 900% |

*Over baseline when available. Otherwise, over year 1.

Beneficiaries:

Goal #1: Increasing Consumer Demand for Local Products

Located in the foothills of the Appalachian Mountains, BFM operates in Low Income/Low Access project priority zones. Madison County is designated transitional economic status with 5 distressed areas by the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) for 2015, with the surrounding counties the BFM serves either designated at-risk or distressed economic status. ARC designates "distressed areas," as those census tracts in at-risk and transitional counties that have a median family income no greater than 67 percent of the U.S. average and a poverty rate 150 percent of the U.S. average or greater. In the center of Berea and within walking distance of the BFM, is Berea College whose mission is to provide a free liberal arts education to low income students from ethnically and internationally diverse backgrounds. Most of the older and married students receive SNAP benefits and many are regulars at the market. BFM is also popular with the staff and faculty of the college. According to our Community Survey conducted after the conclusion of the grant, over one third of the customers served by the FMPP had an annual income of \$25,000 or less reflecting the poverty rates in the surrounding area.



Because of the diverse educational opportunities the FMPP funded, everyone from toddlers to retirees benefitted. On the days of our Second Saturdays when we sponsored multiple educational programs (see Activity 1.2.2), customer counts ranged from 270 during the cooler spring months to 550 during the peak of the harvest. Of those customers, we had a total attendance of 296 children in our Sprouts programming (see Activity 1.2.3) over the two year grant period. The BFM gave over

20 presentations about the importance of farms and farmers markets to a wide variety of audiences including daycare children, low income parents, philanthropy club members, local and state public officials, university students and college faculty. (See Activity 3.3.3)

During the grant period, \$1160 of fresh produce was sold to low income families with young children through the WIC farmers' market voucher program and \$1632 of fresh produce was sold to low income seniors through the senior farmers' market voucher program. With the addition \$21,430 of food purchased with EBT, BFM had an overall total of \$24,789 of low income sale. 74% of survey respondents said that they have greater access to healthful food because of the BFM.

Goal #2: Developing and improving producer market opportunities

Of the 34 vendors, 23 are farmers, 6 are artisans and 5 sell both farm products and handmade crafts. The outreach and education funding reaped rewards for all our vendors as 56% of the customers surveyed said that they knew more about local food and farmers today than they did a year ago because of the BFM, 82% said that they feel connected to the people they purchase from at the market and 92% said that supporting local farmers was important to them.



Most of the BFM vendors have new or emerging businesses and make less than \$5000 a year at the market. FMPP funding helped their businesses grow. Of the vendors surveyed, 93% of the vendors thought that the FMPP helped improve their market opportunities and 67% saw their sales grow between the first and second years of the grant. Over the grant period, several farmers were connected to grants and training (see Activity 2.2.1) and sales climbed. The last year of the grant, our sales increased to \$159,289 which was up from the pre-grant baseline of \$89,288 greatly increasing the economic impact on the community.

We were very happy to receive it (the FMPP) and it made the BFM a warm and welcoming place for people to feel a part of the community while supporting the local vendors.
–Vendor Survey Comment

Goal #3: Ensure effective sustainable market support functions

Although the success of this third goal positively affects the beneficiaries of the other two goals, the most directly impacted were the board and vendors. An overwhelming majority of the vendors polled (93%) said that the functioning of the market improved because of the FMPP grant. Although most vendors agreed that each activity of the grant positively impacted the market functioning, the recruitment and retention of volunteers was what they agreed helped the market the most.

Lessons Learned:

An FMPP grant is a huge project for a smaller market like ours in Berea and it challenged workers, vendors and board members alike. The hard work certainly paid off for BFM vendors and customers as well as giving a boost to the local economy and supplying the community with a much needed gathering space. Much of the first year of the grant was spent just trying to develop the skills, gather the resources and make the connections we needed to successfully accomplish the outreach goal of the grant. By the second year, we got more efficient in planning and had created a reliable list of musicians, volunteers, chefs and entertainers so that more attention could be given to the vendor and market development goals of the grant. It wasn't till writing this report that we realized just how much we accomplished and how much it helped us in planning our 2017 season.

Goal #1: Increasing Consumer Demand for Local Products

Activity 1.1.1: Implement Strategic Marketing Plan: Comparing a survey conducted before the launch of the FMPP grant in 2014 and after the grant ended in 2017, we found that by far, word of mouth remains the best way for new customers to hear about the market and for existing customers to get news about the market. We spent a lot of time and resources on fliers, advertising and media which may have influenced customer in ways that we couldn't measure. But, despite the loss of grant funding for this advertising, we feel confident that because the grant helped us establish a vibrant community gathering space and healthful market, this reputation will sustain us far into the future. Facebook and our e-newsletter were the second and third most favored sources of market news so we are budgeting more money for Facebook post boosts and focusing efforts on keeping our newsletter fresh and relevant.

Activity 1.1.2: Eat Local 101 Education: Of all the Second Saturday Celebration events, the cooking demonstrations were the most time intensive to organize and execute and we hoped that the benefit to the customers and vendors would have outweighed the work. But, our survey showed that only a quarter of the customers surveyed were influenced to come to the market because of the demonstrations and about 35% said that they were either more likely to purchase and prepare farmers market food at home or learned new things from the demonstrations. Far more influential to customers purchasing and preparing food at home was the knowledge that vendors shared at their booths about farmers market food (56%) and free food samples (46%). In the upcoming season, we'll continue to offer cooking demonstrations but will focus more time in encouraging the vendors to obtain their food sampling certificate and to be proactive in sharing information about preparing their products.

Activity 1.2.1 Know Your Farmer: The vendor name tags we created were attractive and easy to read but many had magnets as fasteners which were easily knocked off while vending. With all that needs to be packed and remembered, many name tags were forgotten or misplaced by the end of the grant period. Because of this, they were not favored with the vendors and only 12% of the vendors surveyed said that it increased their sales. Polling vendors about what they'd feel most comfortable wearing (hand crafted

lanyard? personalized tee-shirt?) and being flexible about name tag choices might have increased name tag usage.

The recipe cards and vendor profiles were a hit with our customers. Often, they were more interested in the profile than the recipe but our 100 recipe books went quickly. Taking photos, gathering recipes and writing profiles is a time intensive process but we used these in many different ways on social media, in our e-newsletter, on our website and in our slideshow at the Community Dinner. We will continue to use them in the future and will create profiles and pictures for new vendors.

Activity 1.2.2 Second Saturday Promotions: What started as a once a month event for many of these Second Saturday activities became more frequent as our volunteers and partners expanded. The greatest contribution came from the SFSP which created a welcoming and engaging environment for families. Although most customers surveyed were not influenced to come to the market because of Second Saturday events, many more said they made the market more enjoyable. We will continue to offer cooking demonstrations, Sprouts Club, music and other entertainment but, because they have expanded to more than once a month, we will not promote them as a combined event.

The Community Dinner was wonderful at gathering the community, offering a delicious, locally sourced dinner and celebrating a year spent together at the market. We got a lot of positive community feedback about it. But, we decided we just couldn't sustain that large of an event (200+ plates). So, this coming season, we are planning a much more intimate event with a higher ticket cost to make the event more manageable and profitable.

Activity 1.2.3 Sprouts Club: We credit the success of the Sprouts Club to our partnership with a non-profit that sponsors the SFSP, serves the meals, creates a dining area at the market and organizes the children's activities. It would be difficult to sustain this club without such a dynamic partner. The children are fed and entertained so the parents can more leisurely shop. It also brought in new faces and made hosting a SFSP a very rewarding endeavor for the market.

Activity 1.2.3 and 1.3.2 Low Income Outreach and Retention: Although doing presentations, circulating fliers and distributing food accessibility brochures has its place in outreach, establishing meaningful relationships with low income consumers has a higher likelihood of bringing new customers to the farmers market. The perception that the farmers market is expensive, that fresh food is difficult to prepare and that the farmers market is an unfamiliar way of purchasing food are high barriers to overcome with just paper and presentations. The low income customers BFM tends to attract are mostly consumers who are already seeking to improve their eating habits and find farmers markets a comfortable way to shop.

Where we see inroads being made in changing eating and purchasing habits in low income populations is with education programs built around community gardens. A local church has partnered with a non-profit to create a community garden, serve as a SFSP site and provide children's activities while their parents attend cooking classes. BFM workers have volunteered at the garden and attended planning

meetings. This summer, we will pilot a mobile market at this site and evaluate if this is a viable way to get more local farm food to those who need it most.

Goal #2: Developing and Improving Producer Market Opportunities

Of the activities under this grant goal, the vendors that were surveyed said that the site visits to other farmers markets were the most useful in connecting farmers with resources or information that helped their businesses grow. (53% said it probably or definitely connected them) The manager and board has also implemented strategies learned from these visits and lessons learned from these farmers markets will continue to influence decision making into the future.

What vendors found even more helpful than the FMPP grant activities were informal conversations between vendors (93% said it connected them with resources or information that helped their businesses grow) and e-mails about educational and funding resources for farmers sent by the market manager (80% said it connected them with resources or information that helped their businesses grow.). The market manual for vendors and the bulletin board were useful to a third of the vendors and only two vendors used the micro-processing certification funds. Anything that markets can do to keep information flowing between support organizations and vendors seems to help farmers but personal communication was more effective than printed information.

Goal #3: Ensure effective sustainable market support functions

The activities accomplished under this goal greatly helped BFM become more effective and efficient as well as clarified who we are as a cooperative and how we want to grow. There is better communication between the board and the membership and more involvement of vendors and volunteers in the market. These activities aren't splashy and some are rather grueling but the practices, partnerships, volunteers and organization structures we established are what will keep us going far into the future. More than ¾ of the vendors surveyed agreed that each of these activities improved market function.



Growing a farmers market through grant funding seems like just an opportunity to get stuff but far more important is the way it help creates a vibrant market space with a strong organization foundation. This FMPP helped the BFM board and manager mature in ways that are not easily measurable in metrics or surveys but we hope, if you come visit our market, you will see the difference the USDA support made.