

Farmers Market Promotion Program (FMPP) Final Performance Report

The final performance report summarizes the outcome of your FMPP award objectives. As stated in the FMPP Terms and Conditions, you will not be eligible for future FMPP or Local Food Promotion Program grant funding unless all close-out procedures are completed, including satisfactory submission of this final performance report.

This final report will be made available to the public once it is approved by FMPP staff. Write the report in a way that promotes your project's accomplishments, as this document will serve as not only a learning tool, but a promotional tool to support local and regional food programs. Particularly, recipients are expected to provide both qualitative and quantitative results to convey the activities and accomplishments of the work.

The report is limited to 10 pages and is due **within 90 days** of the project's performance period end date, or sooner if the project is complete. Provide answers to each question, or answer "not applicable" where necessary. It is recommended that you email or fax your completed performance report to FMPP staff to avoid delays:

FMPP Phone: 202-690-4152; Email: USDAFMPPQuestions@ams.usda.gov; Fax: 202-690-4152

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

Report Date Range: <i>(e.g. September 30, 20XX-September 29, 20XX)</i>	September 30, 2014 - September 29, 2016
Authorized Representative Name:	Ben McShane-Jewell
Authorized Representative Phone:	402-474-9802
Authorized Representative Email:	ben@communitycrops.org
Recipient Organization Name:	Community Crops
Project Title as Stated on Grant Agreement:	Growing Market Farmers in Nebraska
Grant Agreement Number: <i>(e.g. 14-FMPPX-XX-XXXX)</i>	14-FMPPX-01 12 NE-333
Year Grant was Awarded:	2014
Project City/State:	Lincoln, NE
Total Awarded Budget:	\$50,616

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

Same Authorized Representative listed above (check if applicable).

Different individual: **Name: Matt Pirog; Email: matt@communitycrops.org; Phone: 402-474-9802**

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

- i. **Goal/Objective 1: 50 beginning farmers will improve their business growing food for market by using better marketing practices and establishing new markets through 10 workshops each year for farmers who have completed at least one year of farming so that they are ready to learn more advanced topics and expand their markets.**
 - a. **Progress Made: From the beginning of the award period to the end, Community Crops hosted 20 events to educate beginning farmers on how to expand their markets to new places. Topics of the workshops included: wholesale marketing, value-added products, livestock, perennial fruits and vegetables, aquaponics, and gourmet mushrooms.**
 - b. **Impact on Community: During the award period, there were 126 beginning farmers that attended these workshops.**
- ii. **Goal/Objective 2: Increase cold storage capacity to allow 40 local farmers storage of their produce. 20 beginning farmers per year will be able to increase their annual farm income by 25% through increased market sales.**
 - a. **Progress Made: Beginning October 28th, 2015 Community Crops made arrangements with Lone Tree Foods (LTF), a local food aggregator, to make our cold storage a drop-off site for producers in their network. We also expanded our cold storage rental opportunities to beginning urban farmers through individual lease agreements.**
 - b. **Impact on Community: Through our arrangement with Lone Tree Foods, 18 farmers utilized our cold storage space. The total dollar value of local food from beginning farmers that passed through this space during the period of this project is \$31,205.**
- iii. **Goal/Objective 3: 48 producers will learn comprehensive food safety techniques. 8 producers will attend GAP Training. 20 farmers per year will attend a food safety workshop presented by Community Crops. 25 producers per year will gain hands-on knowledge constructing and maintaining GAP approved wash stations.**
 - a. **Progress Made: In addition to the workshops mentioned above, Community Crops hosted events to educate participants on food safety techniques. 14 farmers attended workshops on how to write a food safety plan and how to comply with the new rules of the Food Safety Modernization Act. In March 2016, we paid the admission fee for 12 participants in our Growing Farmers Winter Workshop trainings to attend a land-based food safety risk assessment training put on by the Nebraska Farmers Union.**

b. Impact on Community: **26 beginning farmers now have the tools and education to create their own farm food safety plans and decrease the risk of biological contamination on their farms.**

2. Quantify the overall impact of the project on the intended beneficiaries, if applicable, from the baseline date (the start of the award performance period, September 30, 2014). Include further explanation if necessary.
 - i. Number of direct jobs created:
 - ii. Number of jobs retained:
 - iii. Number of indirect jobs created:
 - iv. Number of markets expanded: **5 (Participants have indicated that they are now producing in markets they previously weren't accessing, including wholesale markets, gourmet mushrooms, perennial fruits, small livestock, and value-added products)**
 - v. Number of new markets established:
 - vi. Market sales increased by \$31,505 and increased by insert percentage%.
 - vii. Number of farmers/producers that have benefited from the project: **120**
 - a. Percent Increase:
3. Did you expand your customer base by reaching new populations such as new ethnic groups, additional low income/low access populations, new businesses, etc.? If so, how? **N/A**
4. Discuss your community partnerships.
 - i. Who are your community partners? **Lone Tree Foods**
 - ii. How have they contributed to the overall results of the FMPP project? **Lone Tree Foods coordinates sales among local businesses and farmers. Our cold storage is a drop-off location for Lone Tree Foods and allows more farmers to sell into this market with dependable cold storage available.**
 - iii. How will they continue to contribute to your project's future activities, beyond the performance period of this FMPP grant? **As Lone Tree Foods continues to grow and the number of producers they source from expands, many more farmers will use our cold storage to preserve freshness and access wholesale markets with high quality produce.**
5. Are you using contractors to conduct the work? If so, how did their work contribute to the results of the FMPP project? **Yes, contractors were hired to provide instruction during the workshops. The contractors are recognized farming professionals in their respective markets and provided valuable insight about how to get started in a new market.**
6. Have you publicized any results yet?* **No**
 - i. If yes, how did you publicize the results?
 - ii. To whom did you publicize the results?
 - iii. How many stakeholders (i.e. people, entities) did you reach?

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

7. Have you collected any feedback from your community and additional stakeholders about your work?
 - i. If so, how did you collect the information? **Feedback was collected at the end of every workshop asking the participants to explain the most important things they learned at the workshop and how the information presented will help them in their farm business.**

What feedback was relayed (specific comments)? **Feedback from workshop participants has been overwhelmingly positive and many expressed enthusiasm for more opportunities to learn ways to diversify their farm income. Some specific comments gathered from evaluations are:**

“The experience at The Edible Source Aquaponics tour helped illustrate potential income streams for my farm and helped me understand the start-up costs and time investment if I were to implement such a project. In conclusion, the value added aspect of fish and vegetable production is intriguing and can be a valuable source of income if scaled appropriately.”

“I learned more about quality control, and how harvest and transporting temperatures affect storage. With this information I will be able to store my produce longer”

“I am planning to include producing fruit in Litchfield, NE as part of our Farm to School program.”

“This class has helped me learn how to prevent contamination and will allow me to expand into different markets”

“The most important thing I learned today was about production efficiencies and market identification”

“I am interested in growing gourmet mushrooms on a commercial scale so this class was great!”

“I appreciated that the focus of the workshop was spread between farmer’s markets and other markets”

“I really felt I created a better base of knowledge for growing perennial fruits”

“This class has encouraged me to grow more fruit trees but with a more informed approach to site and preparation”

8. Budget Summary:

- i. As part of the FMPP closeout procedures, you are required to submit the SF-425 (Final Federal Financial Report). Check here if you have completed the SF-425 and are submitting it with this report:
- ii. Did the project generate any income? **YES**
 - a. If yes, how much was generated and how was it used to further the objectives of the award? **\$860 in revenue was generated from workshop admission fees. This revenue went towards compensation for instructors and materials for each workshop. \$595 in revenue was generated from our partnership with Lone Tree Foods as a fee for leasing the cooler space. This revenue was used to offset utility costs of operating the cold storage.**

9. Lessons Learned:

- i. Summarize any lessons learned. They should draw on positive experiences (e.g. good ideas that improved project efficiency or saved money) and negative experiences (e.g. what did not go well and what needs to be changed).
The best teachers to help others access new markets are those that are already accessing those markets but not yet experts. We sought out contractors to teach our workshops that had experience in these alternative markets but were not yet considered experts because of their beginning farmer status. In our experience, this enhances their ability to communicate about mistakes made during their trial and error process. Their level of experience provided a great starting point for class participants in that they didn't feel intimidated by the instructor and also saw how the challenges and intimidations of a new market could be overcome by beginners.
- ii. If goals or outcome measures were not achieved, identify and share the lessons learned to help others expedite problem-solving: **Goal # 2 of increasing cold storage access for 40 farmers was not met. We did increase cold storage access for many farmers, but did not achieve the 40 as stated in our proposal. The reason for this wasn't a lack of capacity in our cold storage, but rather from a lack of producers in the area in need of satellite cold storage space. With a growing interest in urban agriculture and the necessity for a more localized food system we anticipate the demand for cold storage space will continue to grow. We have plans to expand our cold storage space so that small-scale and beginning farmers do not have to incur the significant capital barriers of cold storage space. We will continue to make our cold storage space available to beginning farmers and continue our partnership with Lone Tree Foods as a drop site.**
- 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: **Always schedule time into the event for evaluations. If you make evaluations a part of the agenda, they are more likely to be completed. It is much more difficult to collect good data after an event as concluded and participants have left the site of the event.**

10. Future Work:

- i. How will you continue the work of this project beyond the performance period? In other words, how will you parlay the results of your project's work to benefit future

community goals and initiatives? Include information about community impact and outreach, anticipated increases in markets and/or sales, estimated number of jobs retained/created, and any other information you'd like to share about the future of your project. **Community Crops is committed to using our existing resources, infrastructure, and relationships to provide continued training opportunities for beginning farmers. We will continue to offer educational workshops on diversified agricultural markets whenever financially feasible. In addition, our cold storage infrastructure continues to expand and we will make this space available to beginning farmers for a low cost rental rate.**

- 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? **Community Crops will continue to provide training opportunities and access to infrastructure to beginning farmers that will improve the safety, quality, and sustainability of the local food economy in southeast Nebraska. Through our network of beginning farmers, we are uniquely positioned as an organization to understand the needs of those farmers and their barriers to success. Next steps that our organization plans to take are to collect feedback from past workshop participants and the beginning farming community about the factors they believe are inhibiting their success. The subjects of future trainings will be determined based on information obtained in these surveys. Furthermore, Community Crops will plan to increase their cold storage space and further establish our expertise in low-cost DIY cold storage construction using CoolBot technology. We will continue to make our additional cold storage space available to beginning farmers at low cost and we will use our expertise in cold storage construction to educate and assist beginning farmers that want to learn how to construct their own low-cost cold storage spaces.**