

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

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

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

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

LFPP Phone: 202-720-2731; Email: [USDALFPPQuestions@ams.usda.gov](mailto:USDALFPPQuestions@ams.usda.gov); Fax: 202-720-0300

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

<b>Report Date Range:</b> <i>(e.g. September 30, 20XX-September 29, 20XX)</i>	April 1, 2016-September 30, 2016 (extended through March 31, 2017)
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<b>Recipient Organization Name:</b>	Golden Hills RC&D
<b>Project Title as Stated on Grant Agreement:</b>	Cooperative Poultry Aggregation & Processing Model for Western Iowa Producers
<b>Grant Agreement Number:</b> <i>(e.g. 14-LFPPX-XX-XXXX)</i>	14-LFPPX-IA-0053
<b>Year Grant was Awarded:</b>	2014
<b>Project City/State:</b>	Oakland, IA
<b>Total Awarded Budget:</b>	\$77,356

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

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

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

- i. **Goal/Objective 1: Conduct two organizational meetings with the 30+ identified producers.**

- a. **Progress Made:** We had two meetings in early 2015, one in late 2016, and one in early 2017. Producers were contacted via email and phone, and press releases were sent to local newspapers. Attendance was lower than anticipated, with only 5-8 producers showing up to each meeting, although the list of potential producers grew to more than 40.

Prior to this project, another grant-funded project had identified more than 30 producers in Western Iowa, which saved us significant time. Since we are working with smaller-scale producers (ranging from a few dozen to a few hundred birds), we had some challenges identifying all of the poultry growers. Many of them currently process at a local custom-exempt processor and therefore do not sell at markets, restaurants, or grocery stores, so it is difficult to know who they are and where they are. We used online resources such as farmer group list-servs and Facebook groups. We also mailed press releases to local newspapers and radio stations to spread the word about the project and invite producers to join.

We did not define specific counties or communities for participation, though most of the identified producers were located within about 60 miles of the project coordinator’s office. Once you find a USDA processor, this can help define your region. The location for the live poultry hauler and processed bird transporter can also help determine this. For us, the processor was located south and west of our region, so we decided to have aggregation drop-off sites in the western part of the region to avoid backtracking (see map below).

Since different people attended the meetings, we started each one with introductions and a background on the project. Attendees were informed about the project and encourage to participate and tell others who might be interested. Many were interested in the idea but since it had not been piloted, there was some hesitation to joining. At the meetings, we discussed logistics of the projects and attempted to think of all the challenges and opportunities the project would provide. Most attendees agreed that if the project worked well, the benefits would outweigh the costs since they would have expanded markets and customer bases.

Attendees discussed the preference to have a new poultry plant in western Iowa, which was beyond the scope of this project. A new plant would cost substantial amounts of money and would need a full-time manager. So far, nobody has stepped up to lead this effort. While grant funding may be available, most federal and state grants are dwindling so a person would likely need to self-fund such an endeavor.

Attendees also discussed the possibility of developing growing standards and an organized group (cooperative, LLC, etc.) but ultimately decided against both since the farm sizes and growing practices vary widely. It was instead organized as an unincorporated network of growers, each with their own growing practices that are labeled accordingly.

We kept a growing list of interested producers, all of whom were invited to the meetings. Prior to this project, another grant-funded project had identified nearly 40 producers, and we built on that list. Producers were also removed if they told us that they were no longer interested or available to participate.

b. **Impact on Community:** Producers who attended were informed about the project's history and planned objectives. In addition to the small number of poultry producers, one small, local, custom- exempt poultry processor (Duncans Poultry) and a local foods delivery service (Farmtable Procurement and Delivery) were represented at the meetings. Producers and meeting attendees were regularly updated via email as the project progressed. The meeting attendees were also able to network with other producers and learn about new market opportunities. This networking aspect was invaluable, as it helped increase market and sales opportunities for participants.

ii. **Goal/Objective 2: Provide technical assistance to producers through NCAT.**

a. **Progress Made:** Through meetings and correspondence with producers, we learned what technical assistance they needed and wanted. The contracted technician moved from Iowa to Texas soon after the project began, which made in-person meetings and consultation more challenging. NCAT Poultry Specialist Kevin Ellis visited in August 2016 and provided on-farm visits and technical assistance to producers. He also provided assistance at our other meetings and offered on-farm consultation while visiting. The contractor was also available to talk via phone and email throughout the project. The contractor provided information about growing practices, feed, shelter, transportation, animal welfare standards, and more.

b. **Impact on Community:** Several producers received direct, on-farm consultation and several others learned from the contractor at project meetings. Resources were also shared via email and online. Poultry producers are aware of the resources and technical assistance that NCAT offers, and Golden Hills staff can help connect producers with these resources.

iii. **Goal/Objective 3: Identify method for brokering, transporting, and storing aggregated product through Lone Tree Foods and Farm Table Delivery businesses, offering local food sales and delivery.**

a. **Progress Made:** We worked with FarmTable Delivery, a local food delivery company based in Harlan, Iowa, to deliver processed birds from the USDA processor to their warehouse for pickup. Farmtable Delivery was also available to help sell, market, and distribute processed chickens. Due to logistics, we only worked with Farmtable Delivery and not with Lone Tree Foods, though they could still be a project partner in the future. Both of these were identified previously, and both continued to grow while this project was in process. Without them, this project would have been much more difficult to implement.

b. **Impact on Community:** Poultry producers learned about how the partnership logistics could work. Farmtable Delivery's refrigerated truck picked up the processed birds from the processor and hauled them to their warehouse in Harlan, where producers could pick them up for selling to customers. This allowed participating producers and Farmtable to develop new partners, expand markets, and increase sales. By working with Farmtable, we eliminated the need to hire someone else to drive a refrigerated truck, which saves costs for producers.

iv. **Goal/Objective 4: Develop a cooperative marketing plan.**

a. **Progress Made:** The project was originally intended to develop a cooperative model for processing. Due to producer concerns about losing their individual farm brand through aggregation, we decided to forego this step. Each farm's chickens will be kept separate throughout processing. Each crate of live birds went to the processor with a tag. Processed birds were bagged and then tagged with the farm/farmer's name. Farms will be able to keep their names and on their bagged birds instead of using aggregated branding. We offered assistance to participating producers to help sell their birds, but most had their customers lined up already. We have a large network of local foods and sustainable agriculture stakeholders who could be contacted and encouraged to purchase the poultry if producers were having challenges selling it all, but that has not yet been an issue.

b. Impact on Community: No impact.

v. **Goal/Objective 5: Coordinate agreements with processing facilities to specify production schedules for Spring and Summer 2015.**

a. **Progress Made:** We started by identifying all federally-inspected poultry processing plants within about 200 miles of Southwest Iowa. This information can be found at the USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service website. Many of them are larger plants that do not work with small-scale growers, or they require a strict contract with producers. Only a few small poultry lockers exist in Iowa and Nebraska, all of which are at least a two-hour drive. We found a processor in Nebraska, about 2 hours away, who agreed to allow Western Iowa producers to use their facilities. We need between 700 and 1,000 birds per trip to make it worthwhile for their staff and USDA inspector's time and resources. We initially struggled to reach that threshold, as some of our producers are smaller-scale (fewer than 100 birds), but eventually had a few somewhat larger producers (100-200+ birds) join the project. This objective was delayed significantly but was piloted in fall 2016. Finding the right number of birds was also complicated by several relatively larger growers who had 150-300 birds, as we could only work with about three of them at a time and still reach the 700- to 1000-bird threshold. Ideally, we will work with both these "larger" scaled farms and the smaller ones to reach the required number while also supporting a greater number of producers.

Scheduling was also complicated because we had to work with the processor and transportation company's schedules in addition to multiple producers and the chick and feed seller, and these did not all line up perfectly. We basically worked backwards and found out which dates worked for the processor. From there, we asked which of those dates worked for the producers, and asked the chick and feed seller when they planned to place bulk orders. The producers all had to agree on the final date, even if it may not be the exact same timeline that they had planned. Someone will always have to compromise when scheduling with so many different parties.

All of the producers need to purchase their chicks at the same time in order to have them ready for processing on the same date. We were able to do that through a local poultry processor (who is not USDA-inspected). This was an excellent partnership, but challenges arose with the birds not all being the same size on the agreed-upon processing date due to various growing practices among producers. We identified one other poultry slaughter plant, Wahoo Locker, in Eastern Nebraska that could possibly be used, but their schedule did not work with

Farmtable Delivery's. We recently learned that they are no longer offering custom processing services in 2017.

We also realized that we needed to purchase shipping crates and pay for the transport, which was not included in the original grant request. We first had to change the contractual agreement with NCAT to rearrange grant funds to purchase crates, then had to get a budget change approved by USDA-LFPP. The aggregation and transport will not work unless all producers have the coops that are stackable and can fit neatly onto a trailer. We requested funding for transport to pilot the program, as producers would have been less likely to participate if there were significant upfront costs. We purchased two types of crates: one for the live birds, which hold about 8-10 birds, and one for the bagged birds, which held about 5-6 birds. Small metal tags were used and transferred from the crates at the processor.

One issue with the crates is that they need to be cleaned and sanitized between uses. The processor or hauler may be able to do this, but would charge a fee that needs to be included in the budget. The crates for the live birds need to be picked up from the processor and taken to a central location after processing for participating producers to pick them up later. The crates for the live birds must also be taken to the processor before or during the processing date. These costs must also be considered when budgeting for the project. Crate storage between uses must be figured out in advance too and factored into the scheduling.

After piloting the project, we had some producers whose birds were smaller than they expected, so they ended up not slaughtering all their birds on the scheduled date. This was unfortunate as they were then not able to process at a USDA plant unless they wanted to drive the two or more hours (one-way) to a processor. There was no good way to have a backup plan for this situation since the processor was already scheduling this entire day for our project. It would not have been financially feasible for them to do slaughtering for us on another day for an even-smaller number of birds.

One possible reason this happened was because of different growing practices. As mentioned earlier, growers did not want to agree to uniform standards since they each already have their own ways of doing things. Even if feed rations and other factors are similar, though, there would still likely be slight variations among bird sizes, and this probably cannot be changed. Some variation is to be expected since we are not raising birds in an industrial environment with all the exact same conditions. We also did not want to force growers to change their growing practices as long as they are using humane and sustainable practices.

One possible remedy, if it worked for ordering chicks and feed, would be to stagger the order dates so that some people get theirs a few days earlier if their birds tend to be smaller. If chickens have access to more protein (like bugs) and grains then they will tend to grow faster, so these might be ordered later than those that eat less and therefore weigh less. Still, it would be helpful to have somewhat similar conditions, feed, and rations to try to reduce size variations.

**b. Impact on Community:** By doing the aggregated processing, we will be providing business to a family-owned poultry processor, Farmtable Delivery, a locally-owned hauling company, and several family farms. We also expanded markets for the poultry producers and increased access to healthy local poultry for Western Iowa and nearby markets.

**vi. Goal/Objective 6: Coordinate with producers, transportation and processors to implement a cooperative processing schedule and identify intermediate cold storage location and resources.**

**a. Progress Made:** See response to previous question regarding schedule delays. Cold storage location was identified at a site in Harlan, Iowa that is working to become a regional food hub and community kitchen. It is currently a warehouse

and office space for FarmTable Delivery, a local foods distribution company and project partner. This site would be convenient since Farmtable will be picking up processed product from the poultry plant and delivering to customers in Lincoln, Omaha, and Council Bluffs, which are all located on the route back to Harlan. We purchased an 8x10' walk-in freezer using grant funds, which was installed at Farmtable Delivery's warehouse for storage of the processed poultry.

Depending on size and weight rating of the truck and trailer being used to haul birds (both live and processed), you may not need a CDL-licensed driver. The hauler will, however, likely need a USDOT number if crossing state lines. This will also depend on if they are a for-hire motor carrier. If a participating producer is hauling and not receiving payment, they may be exempt from the USDOT number requirement. Check with a local DOT official to determine any other local/state requirements in your area. Be sure that the hauler has a drivers license and insurance. Develop and sign a contract with them so they know what to expect and to cover any liability concerns.

b. **Impact on Community:** Producers had the option to arrange delivery to customers via Farmtable Delivery once the birds were processed, or their product could go to the Harlan warehouse for temporary freezer storage. If producers wanted their processed birds back, they could pick them up in Harlan or elsewhere if logistically feasible. By having birds processed at a USDA inspected facility, producers will be able to sell to entirely new markets such as restaurants, grocery stores, farmers markets, and individual customers in Western Iowa and beyond, including across the state line in the Omaha and Lincoln metropolitan areas, which have a combined population of over 1 million.

vii. **Goal/Objective 7: Monitor processing schedule throughout 2015 and complete implementation guidebook for adoption by the successfully formed cooperative and to share with other organizations nationally.**

a. **Progress Made:** As noted above, the schedule was delayed due to a number of logistical issues, but aggregated processing was piloted in fall 2016. We received a six-month extension on the grant with the intention of scheduling a second processing date. Since most poultry processors are closed during the winter months, we were unable to do a second round before the grant project ended. We have developed a short guide with information about the project, including challenges, successes, and recommendations for anyone who might be interested in pursuing something similar. Because we faced several challenges and the project did not go as anticipated, the guidebook provides more of a general framework of suggestions rather than an in-depth template.

b. **Impact on Community:** We expanded markets for several poultry producers and supported several small local businesses. The implementation guidebook will help other groups around the country determine how they might be able to replicate this in ways that work for them. The guidebook is available for download at

<https://swiowafoodandfarm.files.wordpress.com/2015/02/ghrcdpoultryprocessingguide2017.pdf>.

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: 0
- ii. Number of jobs retained: 20
- iii. Number of indirect jobs created: 2
- iv. Number of markets expanded: 10
- v. Number of new markets established: 5
- vi. Market sales increased by \$5,000 and increased by 100%.
- vii. Number of farmers/producers that have benefited from the project: 10
  - a. Percent Increase: 100%

**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?**

Possibly. While we have not specifically made an effort to target these communities, the press release, email list and social media promotional efforts for the projects have been sent to a diverse group of stakeholders. Most of Western Iowa, particularly the rural agricultural areas, are not very ethnically diverse, but we encouraged participating producers to consider new markets and customers.

**4. Discuss your community partnerships.**

- i. **Who are your community partners?** We partnered with FarmTable Delivery, a local foods delivery service, for transportation and with a local hauling business for transporting live birds. The walk-in freezer is located in Farmtable Delivery's warehouse, which was also a partnership with the City of Harlan, Iowa. The City owns the warehouse facility and is leasing it to FarmTable Delivery. We also partnered with Duncan's Poultry, which is currently the only custom-exempt poultry processing facility in Southwest Iowa, for a group purchase of chicks and feed. They also transported the live birds. They are an uninspected slaughter plant and raise their own poultry. They are potentially interested in processing some of their birds at a USDA facility to sell to new markets. Plum Creek Farms, the USDA-inspected processor in eastern Nebraska, was also a project partner.
- ii. **How have they contributed to the results you've already achieved?** The pilot run in fall 2016 would not have been possible without all of these partners in addition to the participating poultry producers.
- iii. **How will they contribute to future results?** FarmTable Delivery will continue to provide delivery for processed birds and shared cold-storage space at the Harlan facility. Plum Creek Farms will likely continue to process the birds and Duncans will continue to help the group order chicks, feed, and other supplies as needed.

**6. Did you use contractors to conduct the work? If so, how did their work contribute to the results of the LFPP project?** Yes. We contracted with Kevin Ellis, Poultry Specialist with the National Center for Appropriate Technology. Kevin answered producers' questions about transportation, feed sourcing, processing regulations, and general poultry husbandry. He provided guidance for poultry production, transport, and slaughter practices and standards for group aggregation. The contractor also visited three farms in August 2016 and presented at our producer meetings.

**7. Have you publicized any results yet?\*** Yes.

- a. **If yes, how did you publicize the results?** Meeting notes and other updates were posted on the Southwest Iowa Food and Farm Initiative (SWIFFI) website ([swiffi.org](http://swiffi.org)) and on the SWIFFI Facebook page.

- b. **To whom did you publicize the results?** The results of the meetings were sent to the list of producers who are potentially interested in the project. The information posted online is available for the public to see.

How many stakeholders (i.e. people, entities) did you reach? The meeting notes and other updates have been sent to about 50 poultry producers. Information has also been posted on the Facebook page for the Southwest Iowa Food and Farm Initiative, which currently has more than 200 followers. Information about the meetings was listed in some local newspapers, which likely reached at least several thousand people in the region.

\*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).

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

i. **If so, how did you collect the information?** We talked with poultry producers in person, on the phone, through email correspondence, and through mailed letters mail. We sent a survey asking poultry producers about their operations and about questions or feedback they have on this project.

- a. **What feedback was relayed (specific comments)?**

Some producers expressed concerns about losing name recognition and branding with an aggregated product, which led us to change from a cooperative model to one where each farm keeps its own branding and marketing.

Concerns about collective standards for production were also prevalent, as interested producers range from conventional to organic to everywhere in between, with a wide variety of flock sizes. Any certified organic producers would need to have their birds processed before the non-organic, which would be more work and time for the processor. We decided against using collective standards, and producers will each get their own birds back to label and market at their discretion.

We also had concerns with biosecurity related to visiting multiple farms, which would be the most convenient option for producers. This was exacerbated by the large outbreak of avian influenza in poultry in Iowa in 2015. Visiting numerous farms would also take more time, labor, and mileage, which would increase costs substantially. We decided on a compromise where we have two drop-off sites in the region, so most producers should not have to travel much more than an hour one-way. The hauling company we worked with also expressed concerns with the number of birds they could haul, as the maximum (1,000 birds) would likely be too many for one trailer load. We were able to use them in the pilot project because we had a much smaller quantity of birds. For future processing trips, we will need to hire someone else. Some producers do not have large trailers to take all their birds to a drop-off site in one trip, and will need to work with other producers or find someone else who can help get their birds to one of the two drop-off sites.

Some producers were concerned with all the logistical details and hesitant to commit to the project, but are potentially interested. The October 2016 timeline did not line up with some producers' schedules who were potentially interested in aggregated processing in the future. At least one producer expressed concern with the difficulty of scheduling with so many different parties. It might be easier for some of the larger (200+ bird) producers to drive 2+ hours to process their own birds instead of trying to coordinate with everyone else and worry about having the proper crates, etc.

Concerns remain about the size and quality of the birds. Since producers are doing a group purchase of chicks and feed at the same time, the birds should be similarly-sized and be similar

quality, but different rationing or other factors also affect the birds' size and quality. This happened in the fall 2016 pilot. Some of the birds were too small for processing and the producers had to find a different backup plan for processing. We decided to add another week (totaling 8 instead of 7) for future trips, but some producers are concerned that their birds might then be too large. Due to the processor and Farmtable Delivery's schedules, it would be very difficult to find a backup date if something did not work out with the planned processing and pickup dates. This could potentially be a major inconvenience and cost to producers if they were planning to participate and then were unable to process at the USDA facility.

Some producers are interested in selling bird parts instead of or in addition to whole birds, but we decided to pilot the project using only whole birds. Parts would be an additional cost for the processor, which would complicate logistics. Similarly, giblet processing is another additional fee, so we decided to not do that during the pilot round. Some customers would like the giblets included with the birds, so we will need to consider that for future processing.

We also discussed potential costs of hauling the live birds and transporting the processed birds, which is covered by the grant for the first round but would need to be covered by producers in the future. We have determined what transport costs would be per bird to help figure out how much each producer would be expected to pay. If the costs of processing and transport are too high (in addition to the costs of production), then it may not be financially sustainable for some producers to participate. The easiest way to do this is to have each participating producer pay the project coordinator a small fee based on the number of birds they are hauling, and then the coordinator can make a single payment to the hauler(s).

Storage and logistics of the crates, both for live birds and for processed birds, are an additional challenge. Five producers participated in the pilot project and still have the crates that were used for their processed birds. The crates for live birds were left at the processor and picked up later, which is an additional trip that needs to be factored into project expenses. One participating producer offered to temporarily store the crates for the live birds, but they do not have space to store enough for 1,000 birds, if we were to process that many. We did not use all of the crates for the processed birds since our numbers were smaller than anticipated during the fall 2016 trip. Those unused crates are being stored at Farmtable Delivery's warehouse, but they also would prefer to not store them permanently.

We will need to determine how both types of crates will be distributed and shared among participating producers. Since the participating producers could change with each trip, we need to find a way for those who are participating to get crates from those who have participated but are not participating in the next round. Another option would be to require participating producers to purchase the same or similar crates on their own, which would likely be cost-prohibitive for many of them. Having 1,000 birds would result in the lowest per-bird transportation cost, but that may not be logistically feasible due to the lack of crates and space available for transporting both the live birds and the processed product.

We also had challenges determining the transportation regulations and requirements. Since we are crossing state lines, the driver must have a USDOT number. They do not need an Operating Authority (MC) number because live poultry is exempt. They likely would not need a CDL unless the truck and trailer they are using is over the weight limit requirements for that. We had originally hoped that participating producers would be able to take turns hauling the birds, but not all of them have the required equipment. If they were not for hire, then the regulations would not apply.

We had one producer back out at the last minute. They had been unable to attend our meetings and were confused about the process and were unable to get their birds to the dropoff site for processing. For the pilot run, we did not have any kind of signed agreement with producers, as we thought this might discourage people from attending for fear of repercussions. In the future, we plan to

implement some kind of simple agreement of expectations for all participating parties to avoid a situation like this again.

**9. Budget Summary:**

- a. **As part of the LFPP closeout procedures, you are required to submit the SF-425 (Final Federal Financial Report). Check here if you have completed the SF-425 and are submitting it with this report:**
- b. **Did the project generate any income?** No, the project did not generate income.
  - i. If yes, how much was generated and how was it used to further the objectives of the award? N/A

**10. Lessons Learned:**

- i. **Summarize any lessons learned. Draw from positive experiences (e.g. good ideas that improved project efficiency or saved money) and negative experiences (e.g. what did not go well and what needs to be changed).** While this project is a good idea in theory, implementation proved to be more complicated than expected. Coordinating logistics with many different parties with different schedules across a multi-county region required a significant amount of time and effort. We were fortunate to have Farhtable Delivery, Duncans Poultry, and Plum Creek Farms, all of whom proved to be great partners. Without them, this project would have been much more difficult. Still, trying to schedule processing times that works for producers, the processor, the hauler, and delivery company, was challenging. Storage and sharing of the crates was also more difficult than anticipated, as described above. We also struggled to get producers to participate, though many were interested. Because this was a unique, innovative pilot project, it was difficult for people to understand how it would work without seeing it work first. Since we have done one test run, we now know some of the specific challenges and plan to move forward learning from that experience. It took longer than we had hoped to get the infrastructure organized for the project, but should be easier to do future aggregated processing now that the framework is in place.
- ii. **If goals or outcome measures were not achieved, identify and share the lessons learned to help others expedite problem-solving:** Identify the hauling company, delivery company, and processor as early as possible, and coordinate with them to find a date that works. Learn what all their costs, requirements, limitations, and expectations are. Once you know all these details, find a few producers who are willing to participate. Be honest with them about the challenges, uncertainties, and risks, as it will likely not go exactly as anticipated. After the project has been piloted once, you will learn what needs to be changed and can adapt as needed.
- 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:** Communication is key. Communicate with all interested and participating parties early and regularly throughout the project.

**11. Future Work:**

- a. **How will you continue the work of this project beyond the performance period? In other words, how will you parlay the results of your project's work to benefit future community goals and initiatives? Include information about community impact and outreach, anticipated increases in markets and/or sales, estimated number of jobs retained/created, and any other information you'd like to share about the future of**

**your project.** We plan to coordinate at least one more processing date in 2017, depending on the schedules of all involved parties. Due to logistics and transportation issues, we may not be able to do 1,000 birds at a time, which means producers will have to pay more per bird for the transport for a smaller number. We still need to have at least 750 birds to make it worthwhile for the processor, so we will try to reach that number. We will also develop a system for sharing and storing the crates so that participating producers can use them when needed and share with others. Otherwise, producers will be expected to purchase or provide their own crates that are similar and can easily stack onto the trailer and into the refrigerated truck.

- b. **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?** We have developed a short guide outlining recommendations and steps for coordinating aggregated poultry processing. In summary, identify all the participating parties (producers, processor, and transporters) as early as possible, then figure out what their needs and preferences are. Coordinating schedules with all the participants and coordinating logistics of transportation, storage, and sharing of crates can require significant time and effort.