

**Local Food Promotion Program
Final Report**

LFPP Phone: 202-720-2731; Email: USDALFPPQuestions@ams.usda.gov; Fax: 202-720-0300

Report Date Range: <i>(e.g. October 1-March 31, 20XX)</i>	October 1, 2014-June 29, 2015
Today's Date:	6-30-15
Authorized Representative Name:	Jessica Smith
Authorized Representative Phone:	765-324-2161
Authorized Representative Email:	Jessica@thisoldfarminc.com
Recipient Organization Name:	This Old Farm, Inc.
Project Title as Stated on Grant Agreement:	Local Food Promotion Program: Food Hub Works to Expand Local Brand Recognition and Consumer Base to Grow the Local Food Economy and to Benefit Midwestern Farmers
Grant Agreement Number: <i>(e.g. 14-LFPPX-XX-XXXX)</i>	14-LFPPX-IN-0063
Year Grant was Awarded:	2014
Project City/State:	Colfax, Indiana
Total Awarded Budget:	100,000

1. Outline of the Issue or Problem:

As demand for local, minimally-processed food, especially sustainable, humanely-raised meat and more fresh fruits and vegetables continues to grow significantly in the U.S., supply is not keeping up with demand. States that have historically supplied much of the nation's fresh produce are under increasing threat from severe drought conditions. Midwestern states such as Indiana, which have fertile soils and plentiful water, have agricultural economies that are still deeply entrenched in commodity corn and soybean farming. This Old Farm, an established Food Hub with USDA inspected meat processing facilities and produce aggregation capability, has been a leader in the local sustainable movement for over a decade. As one of only 4 recognized Food hubs in the state, This Old Farm is well-positioned to lead the shift to sustainable pastured meat production and specialty produce farming. We therefore requested funds from the Local Food Promotion Program to grow awareness surrounding the availability of, and need for, locally-grown food. By developing a targeted media campaign, will be able to reach buyers who demand locally grown meat and produce, and create awareness of the growing availability of these products. This demand will create a business case for current sustainable farmers to increase production, and for conventional farmers to start switching acreage to sustainably-raised meats or specialty crops.

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

i. Indicate the low income/low access priority area or Federal Promise Zone, if applicable: N/A

2. Description of how the issue or problem was approached via the project, referencing the project objectives and work plan, and including the contribution of public or private collaborators and partners.

Objective 1	Increase Local Food Awareness Via a Multi-Media Approach
Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a strategic marketing plan <p>In late 2014, This Old Farm owners and staff met with several potential consultants and marketing companies to gain marketing strategy knowledge. We formulated a clear strategy of streamlined marketing efforts to reach Food Service companies such as restaurants, campuses, and institutions. Food Service companies lead food trends, so acceptance of a local product by food service will result in the retail sector following the trend. Rather than hiring a consultant, we decided to work with a web design company and other media providers to launch a “Local Delivered to Your Doorstep” campaign. The campaign would be complemented by an in-house sales and marketing professional. A request was made and granted to move the consulting portion of the original budget to an in-house marketing salary. We hired a chef with 15 years of experience in the Midwest fine dining arena to help establish our local brand and to conduct marketing and new business development among restaurants and other food service clients. She has already brought several new restaurant and institutional clients on board, has increased business from existing accounts, and re-established relationships with lapsed clients.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a branded image, including a logo and graphics update, and branded materials <p>Working with Rolla Creative in Rolla, Missouri, we gave our logo and associated graphics an update so that the business name is displayed more prominently, and the logo can be used not only in print form, but for television and digital media applications. New directional signage, building and premises signage, updated brochures and handouts, branded product packing boxes, product labels, shopping bags, and conference giveaways (pens, magnets) incorporating the new logo were also designed and purchased.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement a diverse local marketing strategy including local radio and television and digital media (including website videos) <p>We gathered bids from several local media providers, including Comcast (cable), Fox Affiliate WXIN Television, and WTHR Television, an NBC Affiliate. We chose WTHR Television because their program provided the most comprehensive and cost-effective coverage. WTHR also has the widest geographic coverage, reaching almost half of</p>

<p>Indiana's counties.</p> <p>WTHR launched a major advertising and public service announcement (PSA) initiative in 2013 to improve health and wellness in Indiana. WTHR creates and airs ads for sponsors billed as Health Experts, including health care providers, hospitals, universities, fitness and sports facilities, healthy food providers, etc., to be aired at strategic broadcast times. This Old Farm, Inc., would be the Fresh Local Food Expert. Additionally, WTHR sponsors a large health expo each year in which Experts participate. Experts are also featured on their website, which logs 11 million hits each month, and on banner ads.</p> <p>We worked with Media Specialist Sue Layton from WTHR to plan and create ad content and testimonial video content. The four testimonial videos will reside on our website. Footage was shot at the farm of one of our key beef producers, at the university dining service that was our first large institutional client, and at a regional hospital with an employee wellness program. The ad campaign focuses on educating the state's food service industry that fresh local food is now becoming available in quantities large enough to meet their needs, and drives interested listeners to our website to learn more. Ads will run for 3 months, in typical 4-second and 30-second formats.</p> <p>We also gathered bids from area radio stations, and chose to partner with all-digital WSHW 99.7 FM ("Shine 99"), located in Frankfort, Indiana, and owned by Kaspar Broadcasting Company, Inc. The station's lite rock format appeals to a variety of adult listeners, including those in the age range likely to be food service managers and restaurateurs. Shine 99 reaches about 14 mostly-rural Central Indiana counties surrounding This Old Farm, and covers the cities of Kokomo, Lafayette/West Lafayette (home of Purdue University and over 160 restaurants), and Frankfort. In partnership with Shine 99 media specialists, we developed two 30-second radio ads that include original jingles and spoken content. In addition to music, news and weather, Shine 99 also airs nationally-syndicated programs such as the popular Dave Ramsey Show. We gain additional value from having our ads air on Shine 99's AM sister station, WILO, which runs daily farm reports and other agriculture-related content aimed at farming listeners in this largely rural demographic. Although we are not targeting farmers directly with this ad campaign, increased awareness of our location in the area may drive additional business to our meat processing facility and may increase membership in our farmer Alliance, which creates a larger supply of product for our food service clientele. Finally, our advertising buy also includes banner ads on Shine 99's website, and on clintoncountydailynews.com., a free online daily newspaper also owned by Kaspar Broadcasting.</p> <p>Our grant dollars were further optimized because WTHR was willing to share the audio portion of the testimonial videos with WSHW to use in the spoken portion of the radio jingles. This sharing saved production time and money, and resulted in better</p>
--

	<p>continuity of message across both media forms.</p> <p>Both the television and radio ads are written to drive interested viewers/listeners to our redesigned website, where they can find more information about our products and services. The goal is to engage users enough to contact us directly about purchasing our products, or to make an on-line purchase.</p>
Objective 2	Web Design, Search Engine Optimization, and Order Fulfillment Technology expansion.
Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhance website content and change look to include updated logo and branding. <p>In partnership with Rolla Creative, our website was overhauled completely. Graphics were enhanced to create a more visually clean interface that is easier to navigate. The updated logo was incorporated, and new higher-resolution photos were added. Outdated sections were removed and new sections were created. New content was written as needed, and existing content was updated, edited, or removed. Links were improved for better intra-site navigation. We secured the domain name “thisoldfarm” so that our website login could be simplified from www.thisoldfarminc.com to www.thisoldfarm.com.</p> <p>Appropriate HTML and related programming was completed by a Rolla Creative programmer to optimize our placement and visibility on search engines.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Programming for enhancing wholesale and retail order fulfillment. <p>A comprehensive overhaul of both the wholesale and retail side of our “online store” was completed. Both retail and wholesale customers can now shop easily on an interface that includes product photos and descriptions, producer information (in keeping with our “Get to Know Your Local Farmer” motto), and clear pricing. We concurrently installed an upgraded version of Intuit QuickBooks to streamline accounting, customer payment, sales trends, and inventory/stock keeping.</p>
Objective 3	Collaboration, Reporting and Surveying
Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Utilize relationships with existing networks to spread information and grow both our supplier and customer base. These include Purdue University Extension, Indiana Farm to School Network, Local Food Association, My Local Indiana, Slow Food, Farmers Market Boards, FFA, and Indiana Grown, an initiative of the Indiana State Dept. of Agriculture to promote sales of Indiana-grown meats and specialty crops as well as Indiana-made value added food products. <p>As our radio and television ads continue to air, and our upgraded website gains traction with customers, we are committed to sharing the learning from these experiences with our partners, collaborators, and the food/farming community in both formal and</p>

	<p>informal settings. Additionally, we will disseminate information about our Food Hub and processing capabilities through the newly updated printed information (brochures, handouts) that were funded by this grant. Enlarging our network by sharing information will in turn result in a larger base of both customers and suppliers.</p> <p><u>This Old Farm staff participated in:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Illiana Vegetable Growers Symposium on January 6, 2015, which is sponsored by Purdue Extension and University of Illinois Extension • Indiana Horticultural Congress and Trade Show, January 20-22, 2015 MOA Conference, February 4-7, 2015 • Indiana Beef Cattle Association Meeting, February 21, 2015 • Indiana Small Farm Conference, March 5-7, 2015 • Good Food Conference, March 19-21, 2015 • Indiana Meat Packers Association, March 21-22, 2015 • La Montanita Food Hub Symposium, May 20-21, 2015 • Indiana Grown/Kroger Corporation Product Selection Show, June 26, 2015 <p>Additionally, Jessica Smith continues to provide a leadership role to the Indiana Farm to School Network Initiative, and was a speaker at the National Farm to School Convention in April, 2015, as well as at the Indiana Farm Bureau Agriculture Awareness Day.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Track new customer outreach from marketing efforts –record all new customer information as to where customer heard about us. Survey 100 customers on new branding response. <p>As the new website goes live and ads continue to run, we will be gathering information from all new customers and potential customers as to where they heard about us. This will help us gauge the effectiveness and reach of the media campaign. Prior to launch, we utilized social media to survey our customers on their reaction to our new logo and branding efforts, and will continue to do so during and after the ad campaigns.</p>
--	---

3. Quantify the overall impact of the project on the intended beneficiaries, if applicable. Include further explanation if necessary.

- i. **Number of direct jobs created:** One (Marketing and New Business Development)
- ii. **Number of jobs retained:** 15
- iii. **Number of indirect jobs created:** 10
- iv. **Number of markets expanded:** Indianapolis, Bloomington, and Lafayette, Indiana; Chicago.
- v. **Number of new markets established:** Illinois outside of Chicago; Ohio
- vi. **Number of farmers/producers that have benefited from the project:** 20 initially, with 100 or more expected to benefit directly.

New customer relationships with All Fired Up BBQ, Mesh Restaurant, Black Market Restaurant, Thunderbird Bar, Penn and Palette Restaurant, Nourish Restaurant, Restauration; Fresh Picks (a home delivery service); Grassland Graze, D&R Market, Downtown Farmstand (small grocery retailers), and

DePauw University's Dining Halls managed by Bon Appetit, have been established in the last 3 months. From past experience, we expect a 12-month lead time from first point of contact to new account generation, so we are significantly ahead of schedule with some of these new customers. However, we are also aware that repeat business, increased business, and orders for more than one product type are required before an account can be considered a steady customer. Therefore, full overall impact will be analyzed a year after the media launch began.

4. Results

We started with a strategic marketing plan, vetted and chose our collaborators (radio and television partners, web design firm) carefully, and then worked with them very closely rather than taking a hands-off approach. This resulted in high-quality advertising campaigns and a state-of-the-art website that have recently launched and are receiving positive reviews. Concurrently, we allocated existing staff members to continue to build relationships with our existing meat and produce partner farmers, and vet newly-interested farmers so that we will be ready to meet increased demand once the advertising takes effect. We were also pro-active in allocating part of the grant to creating a new sales position. By hiring an individual who had worked as a chef for many years and had significant connections in the restaurant community, we were already able to add new clients and gain increased business from existing ones.

Because there is so much overlap in both purpose and content between the media campaigns and the website, we learned the value of parallel-tracking these efforts. Duplicate work was avoided, lessons from one project could be applied to the other, staff and collaborator resources were optimized, and grant dollars were therefore used efficiently.

5. Conclusions/Benefits, Lessons Learned, and Next Steps

We benefitted greatly from learning how to plan and execute a targeted media campaign with key media collaborators. This learning has been captured for any media campaigns we will conduct in the future. We anticipate that the media campaign will drive increased awareness among food service providers, both restaurateurs and institutional food service managers, that locally-grown food is available in Indiana, and that Food Hubs can be a valuable partner in providing it. Increased purchases by the food service industry will make it worthwhile for local farmers to put resources toward sustainable meat and/or specialty crop production, and thus keep family farms in business and help stabilize the economy of rural communities. Increased demand for local food should also help existing Food Hubs grow, and create the need for more Food Hubs. Food Hubs create good, permanent jobs in areas where jobs are scarce.

The most significant lesson we learned was around proper budgeting for media buys. We realized after submitting the grant application that the amount we had budgeted for television advertising was inadequate for a fully effective marketing campaign. We used the existing dollars with maximal efficiency to put a good-quality marketing campaign in place, and buy what air time we could afford, which is 3 months for both radio and television. We are concerned that a three-month campaign will not be sufficient to have long-term effects. For full impact of the funds to be seen, additional funding is needed to make the foundational work of building the campaign maximally effective by fully utilizing the media pieces that were created. For this reason, we completed all work by June 30, 2015, to allow us to

submit a 2015 LFPP proposal. Funding of this proposal would allow complete execution of our marketing plan, with the result of growing This Old Farm from a local/regional leader into a national model Food Hub.

Media Samples can be seen by visiting our website at www.thisoldfarm.com.

Attachments:

SF-425-FFR #1

Logo

Signage