

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; Fax: 202-720-0300

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

Report Date Range: <i>(e.g. September 30, 20XX-September 29, 20XX)</i>	October 1, 2014 - September 30, 2016
Authorized Representative Name:	Steven Bibula
Authorized Representative Phone:	207.239.0442
Authorized Representative Email:	sbibula@maine.rr.com
Recipient Organization Name:	Plowshares Community farm, Inc
Project Title as Stated on Grant Agreement:	Expanding Plowshares' Customer Base and Market Area
Grant Agreement Number: <i>(e.g. 14-LFPPX-XX-XXXX)</i>	14-LFPPX-ME-0088
Year Grant was Awarded:	2014
Project City/State:	Gorham/Maine
Total Awarded Budget:	\$97,452

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: Purchase and put into service equipment and marketing/promotional supplies, in order to establish Plowshares as a robust local food hub and thereby expand Plowshares’ customer base. *Two retail freezers, four retail refrigeration units, one donut robot, one thirty quart stand mixer, one heat pump heat/AC unit, one egg washer and walk-in cooler were purchased and installed. Rebranding completed. Actively managed social media and website established. Promotional signage, branded promotional materials and advertising developed, purchased and implemented.*
 - a. Progress Made: *Local foods are now appropriately merchandized are displayed clearly in our farm market. Promotional efforts targeted in store traffic as well as the entire target region in part or in whole, including special focus in the two low income areas identified in the project objectives.*
 - b. Impact on Community: *We now serve as a hub for at least three dozen local food producers in addition to our own eggs, fruit and pork, and traffic in our farm store continues to increase, including customers from the entire target area included in the grant-identified region. School and camp groups came to the farm and were exposed to local foods. The visiting public enjoyed access to an increasingly wide array of local foods.*
 - ii. Goal/Objective 2: Expand Plowshares’ offering of other producers’ local foods, and promote those foods. *We continued throughout the grant period, and beyond, to seek to complement our lineup of local foods with those of other local food producers not yet represented food producers who want to include their products in our market.*
 - a. Progress Made: *In addition to Plowshares’ own production, over three dozen local food producers offering products in thirteen categories (beef, pork, chicken, lamb, rabbit, turkey, duck, fresh vegetables, processed/fermented vegetables, fruit, breads and pastries, dairy, juice) and were brought in as partner producers. Strategic ‘meet the farmer’ events were held at our farm market to feature and promote both specific partner producers and their products, as well as the food hub market as a whole.*
 - b. Impact on Community: *More sales opportunities for local producers and more options and access to local food for our growing customer base. Achieved.*
 - iii. Goal/Objective 3: Rebrand the farm and farm store to reflect the new emphasis as a U-Pick fruit orchard with a year ‘round farm market featuring a wide range of local foods. *Building on Plowshares’ new brand, website and social media presence and Facebook and Instagram, we established and maintained a vigorous social media campaign connecting the customer base with the farm and market.*
 - a. Progress Made: *New name, new logo, new signage was completed, new website was up and running (www.orchardridge.farm) early during the grant period, new Facebook up and running, Instagram up and kept current, press releases went out, print advertising campaign was commenced. Signage improvements installed. Print campaign was deemed mostly ineffective, and dropped in favor of paid online promotions. Facebook social media paid boost*

campaign much more efficient and cost effective, and became the centerpiece of advertising.

b. Impact on Community: We saw positive results from the rebranding and the social media efforts. Under our DBA, Orchard Ridge Farm, the farm has become increasingly known as a premier source for local meats and many other local foods.

iv. Goal/Objective 4: We implemented a program of active promotion of local foods during open farm days and other meet-the-farmer events, tastings, public tours and other promotional events.

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: *0*

iii. Number of indirect jobs created: *0*

iv. Number of markets expanded: *One*

v. Number of new markets established: *0*

vi. Market sales increased by \$106,507.00 and increased by 230%.

vii. Number of farmers/producers that have benefited from the project: *Thirty-eight*

a. Percent Increase: *approximately six hundred percent*

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? *As a result of grant-related outreach, customer traffic expanded to include residents of the low income target areas as well as communities throughout southern, western and downeast Maine. We also now network with food producers throughout the 'local' region, from Connecticut, New Hampshire, Vermont and Northern and downeast Maine, bringing their products into our food hub farm market.*

4. Discuss your community partnerships.

i. Who are your community partners? *Over three dozen local farmer and other producers of local foods.*

ii. How have they contributed to the overall results of the LFPP project? *Supplying local foods at wholesale or consignment to Plowshares, to be offered for sale at our farm market; select producers participated in promotional events held at Plowshares throughout the grant period.*

iii. How will they continue to contribute to your project's future activities, beyond the performance period of this LFPP grant? *Plowshares' farm market will continue to serve as a food hub for these and other producers, market conditions permitting.*

5. Did you use contractors to conduct the work? If so, how did their work contribute to the results of the LFPP project? *Branding work, design and signage production were contracted to appropriate local professionals who provided services we were unable to provide for ourselves.*

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? Yes.

i. If so, how did you collect the information? *As a for-profit business, we continually sought our customers' feedback, and sought to tailor our market offerings and experience accordingly.*

ii. What feedback was relayed (specific comments)? Customer feedback: *'Ooh, Aah!' 'This is great!' 'I have to leave right now, or I will spend too much money here!' 'Look at all this great stuff!' 'We love to buy local and support local farms.' 'I love all the new products you have in here!'*

8. Budget Summary:

i. As part of the LFPP closeout procedures, you are required to submit the SF-425 (Final Federal Financial Report). Check here if you have completed the SF-425 and are submitting it with this report: x

ii. Did the project generate any income? *No. Plowshares Community Farm has not yet grown to the point of generating a net income. All sales revenue was used toward farm expenses.*

a. If yes, how much was generated and how was it used to further the objectives of the award?

9. 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). *Our own fresh eggs as well as local baked goods proved key to year 'round customer traffic, resulting in additional browsing and purchasing of other local foods; 'anchor' products are important.*

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

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: *Administering our LFPP grant project was quite difficult for us, and in hindsight, we should not have tried to save money by administering it without professional assistance; some measure of contracted support is highly advisable for those new to federal paperwork and lingo. The administration problems were exacerbated by the complexity of our project, with goals that quickly required modification in response to unanticipated market realities that were not in line with our initial ideas. We were also disappointed by some partner producers, upon whom we were initially relying for match contributions, who failed to follow through; this left us having to provide matching contributions through other means, which, though not difficult, added significantly to the administration burden.*

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. *We plan to continue to expand our offering of local foods, as our expanding customer base demands. We aim to increase farm events involving school and camp groups, expansion of agritourism related local foods and production of value added products based on local foods.*

- 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? *Avoid stagnation as well as emotional adherence to personal vision for the food hub market: We have found that a continual vigilance to market trends, and responsiveness to customer demand, are necessary elements for keeping the product lineup relevant and the farm food hub market viable. All producers of local foods need especially to pay attention to economic realities, including the fact that prices tend to move toward equilibrium as more producers respond to demand and/or higher traffic supermarkets continue to enhance their 'farm market' style offerings at lower prices; these trends require farmers to continue to develop new products in order to maintain customer interest in smaller food hub markets such as Plowshares.*