

**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 LFPP staff 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, 2015-September 30, 2015
<b>Authorized Representative Name:</b>	Pakou Hang
<b>Authorized Representative Phone:</b>	651-493-8091
<b>Authorized Representative Email:</b>	pakou@hmongfarmers.com
<b>Recipient Organization Name:</b>	Hmong American Farmers Association
<b>Project Title as Stated on Grant Agreement:</b>	Accessing New Marketing Opportunities and Training Low Income Hmong Farmers in the Saint Paul/ Minneapolis Metropolitan Area
<b>Grant Agreement Number:</b> <i>(e.g. 14-LFPPX-XX-XXXX)</i>	14-LFPPX-MN-0098
<b>Year Grant was Awarded:</b>	2014
<b>Project City/State:</b>	Saint Paul, MN
<b>Total Awarded Budget:</b>	\$100,000

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: \_\_\_\_\_

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.

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: Increase non-direct-to-customers sales by increasing both the volume of existing contracts and the number of new contracts.

a. **Progress Made:** As the growing season ends, we have made a lot of progress on this goal. This year we had over **134** people sign up for our CSA. We had **11** drop off sites and sold over 73,000 pounds of our farmers' produce to over **12** wholesale, food banks and retailers. Our sales so far have exceeded **\$110,000**. Due to the overwhelming positive response we received from our buyers, we already have over **16** new partners signed up to buy our farmers' produce next year.

b. **Impact on Community:** The amazing increase in sales through CSA sales and institutional contracts are just mind-blowing for our farmers. One of the best partnerships that came out of this year's growing season was our work with a nearby food shelf, The Open Door Pantry. That food bank agreed to buy our farmers' seconds for \$.75 a pound. It turned out to be a win-win for everyone: farmers got rid of two day old products and food banks got almost fresh produce at low cost. Going forward we will be expanding this program to other nearby food shelves.

ii. Goal/Objective #2: Increase knowledge and confidence around food safety, marketing and business operations.

a. **Progress Made:** As the growing season ends, **11** farmers have written food safety plans with protocols and log sheets. We have an upcoming close out meeting with our farmers where we will be asking them to fill out post-surveys. These surveys will ask about sales and expenses this year and any learning that occurred. We also hosted **two** trainings on canning and preserving food and sent out over **134** surveys to our CSA members to solicit people's evaluation of the program. We had a **60%** response rate. As a result of this project and past work, our staff has also been asked to join the **Minnesota Food Safety Board** and the **Minnesota Homegrown Board** which are both boards that are appointed by the Minnesota Governor and deal with statewide food safety concerns and local food production respectively.

b. **Impact on Community:** One of the great learning that occurred among our farmers this year was how they ran their businesses. In other words, many were growing and selling produce for the farmers markets *and* HAFA's food hub. But many found that growing produce for the food hub was much easier and more secure. Many have shared with us that they plan to shift their business model next year so that they will grow less for the farmers markets and more for the aggregation operation. This is a great result, but as the food aggregation

business grows so will the labor needed to run the operation. We are tasking our farmers to take a more active role in packaging and possibly delivering the produce so that we can keep costs down while we are rapidly expanding.

iii. **Goal/Objective #3: Increase farmers' incomes.**

a. **Progress Made:** As the growing season ends, sales in HAFA's Alternative Markets Program (sales in CSA shares and institutional buyers) have exceeded **\$110,000**. Farmers have earned as much as **\$20,000** and as little as **\$5,000** through our program. Nonetheless, sales in the Alternative Markets Program grew by **130%** this year from last year (\$48,000), with already 16 new contracts identified. Hopefully sales next year will also increase by 200%.

b. **Impact on Community:** One of the spillover effects of the Alternative Markets Program is that farmers have been less apt to drop their prices at the farmers markets. Knowing that they have a guaranteed second market or buyers who will buy their produce have made the farmers more confident in their products and as a result, actually getting more money for their produce. Moreover, we have tweaked our strategy a little more and will be investing in some type of root cellar or cold storage facility so that we can stockpile on our farmers' root vegetables and sell the produce long into the winter. Hopefully this will also increase sales for farmers.

iv. **Goal/Objective #4: Explore and develop relationships with the local organic food grocery stores.**

a. **Progress Made:** To date, **five** natural food cooperatives carry our farmers' produce and **two** more have approached us to buy our products. In this growing season we also began plans to buy a **120 acre organic farm**. But after a feasibility study, we decided the asking price was too high and we pulled out of the deal.

b. **Impact on Community:** The farmers are extremely happy that their produce are carried by organic cooperatives. In fact, our executive director was the keynote speaker at one of the cooperative's annual meeting.

v. **Goal/Objective #5: Use new technology and farm equipment to make farmers' work less physically taxing.**

a. **Progress Made:** This year HAFA used LFPP funds to purchase a washline (small equipment) and it made cleaning potatoes or carrots which previously were a **three hour ordeal into a 30 minute** process. Farmers were just blown away by the efficiency of the equipment and said it was far and away the best investment in 2015. Going forward, farmers are interested in working together to purchase a mulch layer so that they can start using plastic tarp and drip irrigation.

b. **Impact on Community:** Many of the farmers are older and through the washline, see the value of equipment that can increase the efficiency of their operations while lessening their physical labor. HAFA is also exploring other ways that technology can help our farmers including teaming up with a local college and students in the engineering department to create an app that our farmers can use to record their planting and food safety logs using audio commands since many are not fluent in written English or Hmong.

vi. **Goal/Objective #6:** Increase the number of farmers participating in in HAFA's Alternative Markets Program (AMP).

a. **Progress Made:** This year **11** farmers participated in the Alternative Markets Program (AMP). **Three** more farmers have already expressed interest in joining the program next season.

b. **Impact on Community:** The more farmers in the AMP, the more variety and supply HAFA can aggregate and sell to buyers. The greater volume we can sell, the more buyers we can attract.

vii. **Goal/Objective #7:** Increase the number of farmers engaged in good business as well as good environmental practices to build soil fertility and enhance productivity of the land.

a. **Progress Made:** This year over **11** farmers engaged in using cover crops on their fields and **18** farmers worked with a research assistant to produce crop maps. While the crop mapping exercise took over three months to complete, these maps will help farmers with crop rotation and soil health for next year. Furthermore, this year we began working with our farmers to produce break even analysis on nine popular items (potatoes, string beans, carrots etc.) so that we can determine if our farmers are selling the produce at fair prices. It has been a laborious process.

b. **Impact on Community:** As farmers get better at keeping financial and geographic records of their farming operations, it will only improve their business acumen and help them make better business decisions. Moreover, it will help them get access to insurance and other federal programs that require crop maps and other records.

**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: 27 (5 with partner organizations, 18 with Hmong farmers, 6 with HAFA)
- ii. Number of jobs retained: 8 (Organizers with HAFA, Good Acre and Shared Ground)
- iii. Number of indirect jobs created: 10
- iv. Number of markets expanded: 39
- v. Number of new markets established: 23
- vi. Market sales increased by \$110,000 and increased by 129% from last year's sales of \$48,000.

- vii. Number of farmers/producers that have benefited from the project: 11
  - a. Percent Increase: 25%

**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?**

Yes, as previously mentioned, one of the great outcomes from this year's activities was the forging of a deeper relationship with food banks and food shelves, specifically for our second markets. Moreover, Second Harvest,--which is the major food bank in Minnesota-- and the Good Acre are exploring the possibilities of work with HAFA to roll out a light food processing facility and operation sometime in the next two years. HAFA also learned that cold crop plants such as brussel sprouts and sweet potatoes are especially popular with retailers and will be exploring how we can help our farmers stockpile more of them next year for elongated sales.

**4. Discuss your community partnerships.**

**i. Who are your community partners?**

We continue to maintain great relationships with past partners and are making many new allies. One of our strongest ally is the Pohlad Foundation through their The Good Acre project. In terms of our purchasing partners, we worked with many this year. Some include:

- Fairview Health Services
- Saint Paul Public Housing
- MN Public Housing Finance Agency
- Saint Paul City Hall
- Minneapolis City Hall
- Nexus Community Partners
- Lunds and Byerly's
- Twin Cities Mobile Market
- Twin Cities Local Foods
- Seward Coop
- Mississippi Market
- Open Arms Food Pantry
- Minneapolis Public Schools
- Saint Paul Head Start
- Carleton College
- Hopkins Public School
- South Washington County Schools
- Lancer Dining Services
- Saint Paul Academy and Summit Schools
- Birchwood Café
- Ward 6 Restaurant

**ii. How have they contributed to the results you've already achieved?**

The Good Acre was our number one buyer this year with over \$20,000 in sales. We were also the keynote speakers at their grand opening of their \$4 million processing facility and will be using their space to store and package our winter root products.

**iii. How will they contribute to future results?**

- i. The Good Acre is committed to buying from our farmers this year and in the future and more importantly they are committed to helping our farmers get certified organic which will bring a higher price point. Moreover they are exploring new light processing to support immigrant farmers expand into more markets.

**5. Are you using contractors to conduct the work? If so, how did their work contribute to the results of the LFPP project?**

Aside from using third party vendors to delivery our farmers' produce because we do not own refrigerated trucks or vans, we are not using contractors.

**6. Have you publicized any results yet?\***

Here are 12 stories about HAFA and the Alternative Markets Program:

October 18, 2015

**HMONG FARMERS GROWING THEIR FUTURE**

Eastside Review

October 12, 2015

**FROM FARM TO THE LUNCH TRAY: DISTRICT 833'S NEW PARTNERS**

[Woodbury Bulletin](#)

October 2, 2015

**HMONG FARMERS WORK TO GET TWIN CITIES-AREA PRODUCE IN STORES, SCHOOLS**

Pioneer Press

September 13, 2015

**HMONG AMERICAN FARMERS ASSOCIATION GROWS FARMS, FAMILIES AND FUTURES**

Mary Turck's blog: [Maryturck.com](http://Maryturck.com)

September 13, 2015

**HAFA'S 2ND ANNUAL FARM OPEN HOUSE**

[kstp](#)

September 12, 2015

**FOOD FREEDOM RADIO: PLANTING THE SEEDS FOR CHANGE INTERVIEW WITH PAKOU HANG**

[Food Freedom Radio](#)

August 25, 2015

**HMONG AMERICAN FARMERS BUILD LIVELIHOODS AND ACCESS TO FRESH FOOD WITH COMMUNITY SUPPORTED AGRICULTURE**

[Hmong times](#)

August 21, 2015

**CONSERVATION IN ACTION TOUR HELD IN MINNESOTA**

AgriNews

July 23, 2015

READERS WRITE (JULY 23): COMMUNITY AGRICULTURE

[Star tribune](#)

July 16, 2015

MOBILE FOOD STORE HEADING TO MINNEAPOLIS

[Star tribune](#)

April 23, 2015

MINNESOTA'S IMMIGRANT FARMERS ESTABLISH NEW ROOTS

[Star tribune](#)

April 1, 2015

HAFSA IS FEATURED IN SEWARD CO-OP'S NEWSLETTER "SPROUT!"

Seward Co-op's Newsletter "Sprout!"

- i. **If yes, how did you publicize the results?** We have had the work of the Alternative Markets Program featured in a mainstream newspaper article and other mainstream media outlets.
  - ii. **To whom did you publicize the results?** Pioneer Press newspaper, KSTP television, East Side Review and Star Tribune newspaper. We were also on Air America, KFAI Radio and may be featured on a national television show.
  - iii. **How many stakeholders (i.e. people, entities) did you reach?** Over 300,000 people.
  - iv. **\*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?** Via monkey survey.
  - ii. **What feedback have you collected thus far (specific comments)?** Please see the Post Survey Results document attached to this report.
- 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:**
  - ii. **Did the project generate any income?**
    - a. **If yes, how much was generated and how was it used to further the objectives of the award?**

Yes, income was generated from the sale of CSA shares and sales contracts. But all of that income is being distributed back to the farmers.

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

We have learned many lessons from this project, but two stick out: pricing produce and logistical challenges. While overall, this project has been an extremely positive experience and our farmer have fully supported our efforts; we have also struggled with many obstacles and in retrospect, learned many lessons. One lesson we learned was about pricing our produce so that the farmers still made a profit and buyers still were willing to buy the products. That lesson came when we incorrectly assumed the weight of a quart of brussel sprouts and agreed to a contract for the items at \$1.50 a pound. When the summer arrived and we actually start selling products to a retailer, none of our farmers were sending the items to our packing house for packaging and delivery. When we finally asked them about the shortage, they told us that they were getting at least \$3 a pound at the farmers market and that was when we learned our mistake. We were deviated and felt that we really let our farmers down. That learning later spurred us to do in-depth cost of production analysis with at least seven items to really get more accurate and fair sale prices for our farmers.

Another lesson we learned was about the time it took us to track all the logistics required for this program. These items included tracking and monitoring CSA sales, invoicing, delivery routes, farmers' payments etc. During the peak season, our organizers and food hub leaders were not getting home until 11 o'clock at night because they were still data entering excel spreadsheets. In one instance, a delivery was not made because the driver went to the wrong door of the retailer's facility and we did not know about this spoiled delivery until the following week. We knew we needed a better, more streamlined system of tracking all the different moving parts in our program.

But despite these challenges, we also learned many good lessons, the most important being that our farmers were open to shifting their sales patterns to send more produce our way than selling the majority of the fresh vegetables at the farmers markets. In the past they would only send us perhaps 20% of what they grew, but after last season's success, many are intending to send us 50% or even more of the volume of their production so that we can sell to even more markets. This is a bright spot since our farmers will not have to do as much physical labor to get these sales executed.

#### **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.**
- 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?**

This final performance report concludes our work on this grant, but the work of the Alternative Markets Program and finding innovative markets for social disadvantaged farmers in the Twin Cities continues.

We will parlay the relationships built and lessons learned from this project into even stronger relationships with other schools and food shelves and more streamlined logistics including invoicing and delivery routes. In fact, we have decided to switch delivery services for next year and have abandoned our previous excel tracking system for a professionally developed commercial software that tracks CSA sales. Moreover, we have decided that in order to expand our markets, we need to be GAP certified and have already engaged in a capital campaign to raise funds for a new packing house and walk in cooler. In the coming months, we will be submitting RFPs and contracting with architects and contractors to build the new facility.