

Local Food Promotion Program 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. October 1-March 31, 20XX)</i>	September 30, 2014 to December 30 2016
Today's Date:	December 29, 2016
Authorized Representative Name:	Sam Arnold
Authorized Representative Phone:	215-275-3435 x8
Authorized Representative Email:	sam@thecommonmarket.org
Recipient Organization Name:	Common Market Philadelphia
Project Title as Stated on Grant Agreement:	Local Fresh Food Project
Grant Agreement Number: <i>(e.g. 14-LFPPX-XX-XXXX)</i>	14-LFPPX-PA-0152
Year Grant was Awarded:	2014
Project City/State:	Philadelphia, PA
Total Awarded Budget:	\$133,333

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).

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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 and have been approved by LFPP staff, 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 toward each one and indicate the impact on the community, if any.

i. Goal/Objective 1: To establish an aggregation site in Lancaster County, PA, to improve the safety, quality, shelf stability, reputation, and market potential for locally sourced and sustainably grown farm food in our region.

a. Progress Made: In 2015, The Common Market established an aggregation site for 22 farmers that are part of the Sunny Harvest cooperative in Lancaster County, by constructing a hydro-cooler. The cooperative mainly uses it to cool broccoli, corn, and lettuce. Since installing the cooler, Sunny Harvest has seen a substantial increase of demand for its products and has increased the number of acres under sustainable production.

b. Impact on Community: The hydro-cooler has had a positive impact on the farmers using it, on our customers, and on The Common Market’s ability to market local food. By having the hydro-cooler, sunny Harvest has been able to grow cool weather crops even during the summer and have advertised this to all of their customers. Because of our support in funding the hydro-cooler aggregation site for Sunny Harvest, we have been able to negotiate lower prices and greater quantities of their products for the next three years. Because the quality of their product is improved, we are happy to commit to long term purchasing from Sunny Harvest. Our customers are also happy with Sunny Harvest products. In October 2014, the first month of our LFPP grant, we sold Sunny Harvest products to 45 customers. In October 2015, we sold Sunny Harvest product to 146 customers, and by the end of the grant period, we sold their products to 260 customers, including 23 community organizations, 37 hospitals and eldercare communities, 12 public schools, and 43 college and university accounts, in addition to restaurants, retailers, and other customers. During the first year of the grant, we sold \$68,274 worth of produce from Sunny Harvest to our customers. During the second year of the grant, that amount increased by 67% to \$114,164 of food. Even during the off season, our customers are ordering Sunny Harvest food because of the quality of their products and their stellar reputation that this project helped to build. The Local Fresh Food Project has allowed the farmers of Sunny Harvest to expand their production, expand staff capacity, and reach new business opportunities.

ii. Goal/Objective 2: To establish another aggregation site in the Lehigh Valley, to improve the safety, quality, shelf stability, reputation, and market potential for locally sourced and sustainably grown farm food in our region.

a. Progress Made: During this reporting period, our plans to install a cold-storage aggregation site at the Seed Farm came to an end. The installation of the aggregation site was contingent upon the Lehigh County government approving the use of three-phase power in a section of their electrical grid that uses one-phase power. The County did not give its approval, which made the use of cold-storage unit impossible. Because of this change, we instead created an aggregation site in Lancaster County. Because our LFPP increased demand for their products so much, Sunny Harvest needed additional cold-storage capacity. In May 2016, we provided Sunny Harvest with a refrigerated shipping container for a new aggregation site they began renting that year.

b. Impact on Community: The second aggregation site for Sunny Harvest has been extremely helpful for their business. They hired a warehouse manager full time to service the aggregation site. The aggregation site has allowed them to maintain their level of growth instead of plateauing. Between May 2016 (when the second aggregation site launched) and September 2016 (the end of the grant period), we sold \$82,240 of Sunny Harvest’s products, a 47% increase over the \$55,984 in sales made during the same period in 2015.

- iii. Goal/Objective 3: To establish a third aggregation site in the Delmarva Peninsula, to improve the safety, quality, shelf stability, reputation, and market potential for locally sourced and sustainably grown farm food in our region
 - a. Progress Made: As discussed in previous reports, it became unfeasible operationally to establish an aggregation site in Delmarva and this objective was unable to continue.
 - b. Impact on Community: N/A
2. Quantify the overall impact of the project on the intended beneficiaries, if applicable. Include further explanation if necessary.
- i. Number of direct jobs created: 2
 - ii. Number of jobs retained: 3
 - iii. Number of indirect jobs created: 0
 - iv. Number of markets expanded: 0
 - v. Number of new markets established: During the grant period, we increased the number of wholesale customers who bought products from the farmers participating in this LFPP project by 177 accounts, from universities to restaurants, hospitals to community organizations.
 - vi. Market sales increased by \$51,495 and increased by 306% in year 1 and increased by \$45,890 and increased by 47% in year 2.
 - vii. Number of farmers/producers that have benefited from the project: 22 farmers are using our aggregation site.
 - a. Percent Increase: Started at 0.

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?

This LFPP project supported our staff capacity for marketing our produce to new and existing customers. During the grant period, we gained hundreds of new wholesale customers from Washington D.C. to Princeton, NJ. While we cannot systematically collect demographic data on our customers' customers, through conversations with our customers, many of who regard us as a partner rather than a vendor, we know that we have reached new populations. In Philadelphia, we began selling to a Puerto Rican community organization that operated four Head Start early child care programs in low-income neighborhoods. In Washington, D.C. we began selling food to DC Central Kitchen, which manages food service for several DC public schools serving predominantly African-American students in low-income neighborhoods. During the course of the grant, we sold to new hospitals and universities in Philadelphia and Baltimore that are major employers, and food service providers, to tens of thousands of people as diverse as the cities themselves.

4. Discuss your community partnerships.

- i. Who are your community partners?

Our farm partners in this grant include Sunny Harvest LLC, a cooperative of 22 individual farms in Lancaster County. Our customers are also actively engaged in our community, making local food accessible to more people. We also work directly with community organizations, including community based neighborhood revitalization groups, urban agriculture groups, Head Start programs, Philabundance (the region's largest food bank), and others.

- ii. How have they contributed to the results of the LFPP project?

Our farm partners have worked with us to develop our aggregation system plans, communicating their needs and capabilities, and letting us know when our plans would not work with their operations. Our customers have contributed to the Local Fresh Food Project by indicating what kinds of products they would like to buy locally, such as broccoli.

5. Did you use contractors to conduct the work? If so, how did their work contributed to the results of the LFPP project?

Contractors constructed the Sunny Harvest hydro-cooler, which is a large piece of equipment. Their work was critical to getting the hydro-cooler operating quickly, before the hottest months of the year. We also used contractors to transport the coolers.

6. Have you publicized any results yet?

No

- i. If yes, how did you publicize the results? N/A
- ii. To whom did you publicize the results? N/A
- iii. How many stakeholders (i.e. people, entities) did you reach? N/A

7. Have you collected any feedback thus far about your work?

- i. If so, how did you collect the information? We have conducted general feedback surveys through our workplace CSA program, The Common Market Farm Share, which features Sunny Harvest's produce almost every week. We also record compliments from our wholesale customers when they have time to tell us about their use of our products
- ii. What feedback have you collected thus far (specific comments)?
Many of our Farm Share participants provided positive feedback about the quality of produce in the program, much of which is provided by Sunny Harvest. For example, one participant wrote of Sunny Harvest's collard greens, "I loved the collard greens this season. I would have never bought them in a store but the farm share "forced" me to cook them. It was one of my favorite meals from the season. My family and I loved it."
In general, we fewer complaints of produce not lasting long enough. Some wholesale customers also provided specific feedback on items supplied from Sunny Harvest, "Beautiful tomatoes—in perfect condition. Also like the strawberries—small and ripe."

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
 - 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). We learned that flexibility with our project activities is important to achieving project outcomes. Changing our first aggregation site from a dry cold-storage unit to a hydro-cooler met both our goals for the project and the unique needs of small farmers in Lancaster, and created an even bigger impact than our originally plan. Our project also definitely taught us that small farmers can compete with large farms and conventional agriculture if they have access to the kinds of infrastructure that agribusinesses can access. Infrastructure investments can be transformative, but our project definitely taught us that groups should prioritize the *quality* of plans for infrastructure investments over quantity of infrastructural investments.
- ii. If goals or outcome measures were not achieved, identify and share the lessons learned to help others expedite problem-solving: We did not achieve our goal of establishing a

third aggregation site (particularly in Delmarva). The main barrier was not having enough suitable farms in proximity to one another to make the use of an aggregation site there feasible. In hindsight, we were too ambitious to set up a site to serve the area and needed to conduct more outreach and research to demonstrate the feasibility of the idea before making an investment in infrastructure. Other organizations conducting similar projects should garner agreements from potential farms and make sure that between the truck routes, product costs, and other costs, ongoing use of a cold-storage aggregation site will be financially sustainable and will present continuous and renewable buy-in from all parties involved.

- 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: Having clear expectations for the use of aggregation sites prior to their installation is helpful for farmers and for operators, and helps to develop long-term buy in for their use. Furthermore, for organizations that provide free shared infrastructure for farmers, mid-term pricing and purchasing agreements are a useful way to ensure a steady supply at lower prices while creating larger sales for farmers who use the free infrastructure. Such agreements are a good way to boost the impact of infrastructural investment.

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 will continue to conduct outreach to increase sales of our farmers' products and to increase access to healthy and local foods to low-income communities and communities of color in Philadelphia and the rest of the Mid-Atlantic. Use of the aggregation sites has not reached full capacity yet, so as we market local food to new wholesale customers, farmers participating in the LFPP project will continue to grow their sales to The Common Market. We expect that our farmers will increase the number of acres in their production and expand their businesses. Overall, our project has increased the viability of local and sustainable farming and the economic vibrancy of rural communities. It also has improved the marketability of local foods in our market and among wholesale customers, as evidence by our increasing sales year after year. Better marketability will compound interest in local foods and our ability to sell greater quantities of food from small farmers in years going forward.

- 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?

Further research could be conducted on different types of infrastructural investments that could be made to improve the post-harvest handling and perishability of local produce beyond hydro-coolers and cold-storage. Regular assessment of small farmer infrastructural needs and regular assessment of food hub infrastructural needs (that correspond to community and customer demand) should be conducted to identify opportunities for infrastructural investment that meet the needs of both communities.