

**Farmers Market Promotion Program (FMPP)  
Final Performance Report**

The final performance report summarizes the outcome of your FMPP award objectives. As stated in the FMPP Terms and Conditions, you will not be eligible for future FMPP or Local Food 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 FMPP 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 FMPP staff to avoid delays:

FMPP Phone: 202-690-4152; Email: [USDAFMPPQuestions@ams.usda.gov](mailto:USDAFMPPQuestions@ams.usda.gov); Fax: 202-690-4152



<b>Report Date Range:</b>	September 30, 2015 – September 29, 2018
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<b>Recipient Organization Name:</b>	Corporación Juvenil para el Desarrollo de Comunidades Sostenibles
<b>Project Title as Stated on Grant Agreement:</b>	Caguas-Puerto Rico Farmers Market Promotion Program

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<b>Grant Agreement Number:</b>	15-FMPPPR0063
<b>Year Grant was Awarded:</b>	2015
<b>Project City/State:</b>	Caguas, Puerto Rico
<b>Total Awarded Budget:</b>	\$94,045

FMPP 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: Ana G. Rodríguez; Email: anarodz1965@gmail.com; Phone: 787-447-2098

1. State the goals/objectives of your project as outlined in the grant narrative and/or approved by FMPP 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 consumption of domestic grown products

- a. Progress Made: We directly coordinated 54 Farmers Markets and participated in additional 48 Farmers Markets during this reporting period

- b. Impact on Community: As we provided orientations and workshops and coordinated and attended Farmers Markets, we educated the community on the options they have available to make their business viable. Not only we taught them how to become an entrepreneur, we also provided them with the tools to make their business a reality. Having a value-added business incubator and a farm incubator with all the required permits and licenses is a major plus since the process to formalize a farm or a food related business could take up to 2 years. After we started holding Farmers Markets and released the Consumer Awareness Campaign, we have helped other communities organize their own markets and our farmers participate in both. Even large shopping malls are holding Farmers Markets. Since the economy of Puerto Rico is so distressed, people are looking for options to create a job prior to leaving the Island and we help them make it a reality. We met 166 new farmers during this grant period and had formal weekly meeting where we discussed upcoming activities and held workshops in subjects such as marketing, social media, organic plant food and plague killers as well and entrepreneurial training so they could complete their business plan. However, after hurricanes Irma and María lots of the farmers fled the Island or left the industry. However, since then, we have seen an increase among young people to become farmers. The lack of food after the hurricanes (lines in supermarkets were up to 7 hours long and what was available was very limited) made people realize the importance of food security and they have started to plant in their homes, schools and public gardens. We partnered with Puerto Rico Seed Relief and Seeds for Puerto Rico and distributed over 7,000 seeds packages from over 200 varieties in more than 35 Municipalities. Over 80% of the crops were destroyed and are now regrowing. We currently have over 116 entrepreneurs that participate in our Markets, more than 25 small farmers selling directly to consumers and we continue to meet weekly. After the hurricanes, we only missed one Farmers Market and the amount of farmers is growing in every Market we hold.

- ii. Goal/Objective 2: Meet the food needs of low-income individuals in the Caguas Region
  - a. Progress Made: We completed a Community Needs Assessment where we captured local agriculture related activities and capacities and identified local food needs and consumption in 4 communities. We presented the findings of this assessment in Habana Cuba in May 2017. We hired a Community Worker that helped us validate the results by visiting individually those that could start a business in farming or in the development of a value added product. We organized guided tours of our farm and value added food incubators to educate communities. In 2016, farm income in Puerto Rico grew 25% to more than \$900 million and the amount of acreage cultivated rose 50% generating over 7,000 jobs. However, after María we saw an Island with no food and imports grew from less than 85% to more than 93%.
  - b. Impact on Community: After completed the Community Needs Assessment, we had a clear idea of who to target in those 4 communities. We visited 1,350 homes and completed 317 interviews. 84% of all homes had home gardens as well as small farms where they grew products mostly for their own use (food security). After identifying what families planted, we concluded that people plant what cannot be imported such as coriander and “recao”. We also identified value added producers that were selling their products informally and could become part of our business incubator. However, after visiting each one of them individually, they showed little interest in formalizing their business as they felt comfortable with the income they were generating and did not want to affect their public benefits. People in the communities got to know us and did refer people that wanted to formalize their business. Also, small entrepreneurs from the communities we contacted as well as others started to participate in our Farmers Markets and also started to invite us to participate in the activities they organized.
- iii. Goal/Objective 3: Incubate at least 5 economically viable and self-sustaining value-added enterprises that use locally grown agriculture products
  - a. Progress Made: This grant allowed us to focus on identifying entrepreneurs interested in developing value-added products using local raw materials. We developed and intake profile that we follow up with monthly/quarterly reports where we measure their progress and captures their improvement. One issue worth to mention here is that the State Department of Health is responsible for ensuring that all food products are manufactured in a licensed facility. However, due to lack of personnel they only have one person in the Island that approves products’ labels and they hardly visit licenses facilities. This reality doesn’t incentivize entrepreneurs to formalize their products and promotes the sale of illegal unlicensed products all throughout the Island. We oriented 283 entrepreneurs manufacturing their products in their own kitchens. Of those we were able to secure 10 contracts for 47 individual products. In addition, we have 4 additional entrepreneurs with 9 products waiting at the State Department of Health for their labels to be approved so we can close on the contract. Some of the products been incubated are: hot sauces, chimichurri, mayonnaise, flavored butter, coconut rice, dips, flavored oils, rum cake, kimchi, etc.
  - b. Impact on Community: Our value-added business incubator is the only one operating in the Island. This USDA grant in partnership with a non-for-profit and the Municipality of Caguas is also the 1<sup>st</sup> one of its kind. Many communities have

visited us and continuously refer people to us. They see their entrepreneurs' ideas as doable using us as the tool to make it a reality formalizing their businesses. When we present our incubator together with our farm-incubator (54 acres farm) and our point-of-sale incubator (store at the Caguas Farmers Market), communities see an organization that work in their best interest with the necessary tools and resources to help them formalize their business and create their own jobs. However, it is extremely difficult to convince people to formalize their businesses so they prefer to run their business informally because (1) the documentation required by governmental agencies is too cumbersome, (2) their public benefits would be reduced if they start generating income and (3) they feel more comfortable making their products at home at their own pace without having to complete a business plan or pay rent, follow GMPs or following any of the rules dictated by State and Federal agencies. Small farmers and producers gained a sense of pride using our Consumer Awareness Campaign materials; it makes them feel more "formal". After the hurricanes and the lack of food available in the Island, we experienced an increase of entrepreneurs wanting to formalize their business so they could sell to supermarkets and commercial chains so we oriented many people even though we had no water or power. However, they did not follow thru after the initial orientation and continue to operate informally since local agencies don't monitor efficiently.



iv. Goal/Objective 4: Provide Caguas-region consumers and municipal and private food programs an increased supply of price competitive and available affordable nutritional food products that improve the quality and nutritional value of vegetables, fruits farinaceous and herbs available to the Caguas region communities at the same time that consumption of local products increases.

a. Progress Made: Under this grant, we had many meetings with Head Start, the Municipality, Hospitals and other institutional clients. We were also able to attend bidding meetings and became familiar with the process. We were able to secure sales to hospitals and created a farmers coop. We had a VISTA worker helping formalize the coop and when she finished her assignment and handed over all of her work to the coop, they decided not to continue because it was too much work and they were not able to agree on meeting times or dates. We were able to sell to hospitals until the hurricanes hit us. We started buying from a few farmers and as the purchases increased we bought from 10-15 different farmers

to fulfill one sale. We sold about \$58,500 of local fresh products institutionally and were able to also increase the sales from our own farm. We had a Sales Manager in charge of all these institutional sales, but after losing all our crops and hydroponics to the hurricane, losing all our income in this category, we had to eliminate the position.

b. Impact on community: Building the capacity of small individual farmers to sell directly to hospitals and other institutional markets was a key. With entrepreneurial training and the Agri-Business Guide serious farmers were able to take their farms to a higher level and started selling directly to various institutions. Even though, the coop did not choose to stay together, we developed a Work Plan; legally formalized the coop and they were able to work together for over two years. We bought directly from over 20 farmers, which ensured their financial stability and encouraged them to formalize their farms. By proving that these farmers could have viable businesses, we impacted each of their communities. After the hurricanes devastation, communities moved to “survival mode” and instead of getting their farms up and ready, the priorities were the roads, communications, power and water. It took over 9 months for most of our farmers to get their power back; none of them were insured or had appropriate equipment to clean their farms. Now, over a year after the hurricane we are seeing that some farmers have been able to rebuild.

v. Goal/Objective 5: Design and implement a formal technical assistance and training program targeting local farmers so they can expand, improve their systems and infrastructure so they can grow their business and increase their crops.

a. Progress Made: During this grant period, we researched designs of formal and technical assistance programs, we received proposals from Agribusiness Guide potential developers and, we designed and completed the Agribusiness Guide. We also established a schedule (every Tuesday) and facilitate the Guide in various workshops. We also brought other resources to help complement the Guide and to touch on specific subjects the farmers wanted more detailed and specialized information.

b. Impact on community: We formalized Tuesdays as our meeting and workshops days with small farmers and value-added producers. We met over 40 times to facilitate the Guide and touch on various other issues such as the Farmers Markets and specific needs. Some of these subjects included: personal and business budgeting, financial education workshops, product quality, financial options for farmers, what do clients expect from your fresh products, natural pesticides and fertilizers, how to get the most out of social media, distribution alternatives for fresh products, etc. All of these meetings were opened to communities at large and were announced in our Facebook Page. We also provided one-on-one technical assistance in an as needed basis.

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, 2015). Include further explanation if necessary.

- i. Number of direct jobs created: 16
- ii. Number of jobs retained: 20
- iii. Number of indirect jobs created: 5

- iv. Number of markets expanded: 2 – Distec expanded from selling to hotels to motels and casinos, he is also selling on detail in gas stations. Coradini’s Gourmet expanded to supermarkets from only selling in small retailers and Farmers Markets.
  - v. Number of new markets established: 5 – Nana Kimchi started selling to supermarkets, Pique Don Bori started selling to wholesalers and is exporting to Florida, Coradini’s Gourmet started exporting and Boreke Rum Cake is doing testing to start selling to cruise chips.
  - vi. Market sales increased by \$319,800 annually and increased by 255%.
  - vii. Number of farmers/producers that have benefited from the project: currently, 25 producers are either manufacturing in our incubator or on their way to formalize their business, 39 farmers actively participate in the Farmers Markets and we bought directly from about 20 farmers to sell institutionally. We have hundreds of farmers and producers that have benefited from our workshops and orientations, but they are not counted in these numbers.
    - a. Percent Increase: over 500% because thanks to this grant we were able to reach so many farmers and producers that ended up benefiting from the program. One example are the weekly meetings we have been holding for almost two years that we did not have before as well as a formal agri-business guide that we facilitate and have distributed over 150 copies.
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?  
 At the beginning of this grant, we reached our farmers and producers through word-of-mouth. With this grant, our Marketing Specialist and the Community Needs Assessment we were able to significantly expand our customer base and reached low income/low access populations that we otherwise would had not been able to reach, specially young people. In addition, we were able to reach businesses through the institutional sales initiative such as Head Start, Elderly Centers, Hospitals, Hotels, Motels, Wholesalers, etc. We started our face book page on January 2016, shortly receiving this grant, and we currently have 6,500 followers and have reached over 458,000 from 45 countries speaking 18 different languages.
4. Discuss your community partnerships.
- i. Who are your community partners? PR State Department of Agriculture (FIDA, ADEA, AGRO Juvenil), Fuerza PYMES, Caribbean Produce Exchange, Semillero Ventures LLC, Autonomous Municipality of Caguas – Economic Development Department, Community Affairs Department, Culture, Secretariat of Administration, Finance Department, Communications), COSSEC, State League of Cooperatives, AgroCoop Centro Oriental, Junta Comunitaria Las Carolinas, Junta Comunitaria Savarona, Asociación de Residentes Bo. Hormigas, Asociación Comunitaria La Mesa en Acción, Alianza Comunitaria FAROS, Inc, University of Puerto Rico, Sistema Universitario Ana G Mendez, US Department of Health and Human Services, Vocational School of República de Costa Rica, Oriental Savings and Loans Coop, Social Action Agency, AsoPymes, AgroSupport, Municipality of San Juan, Caimito’s Rescue Citizens Commission, Center for Puerto Rico, WIPR Station, Channel 6 PR, AARP Foundation, Non-Profit Evaluation and Resource Center, Sacred Heart University, Vitrina Solidaria, San Salvador organized Community, PAKANA Natural Products, Jesus Obrero Coop, Gurabo Agricultural Extension, Mall of San Juan, Channel 13, Barsan Companies, AgroVida, Primavera hydroponics, Don Yerbajo Hydroponics, Columba College, Inova Create, Colmena 66, Fomento Government of PR, Seed Relief Puerto Rico, Seeds for Puerto Rico.

- ii. How have they contributed to the overall results of the FMPP project? Working with many of the Municipality's departments, we are able to have access to the many activities each one of them organizes. We receive support from their staff and do not have to pay for our participation in the activities where lots of public attends and we are able to take our farmers and producers to exhibit and sell their products. Some of our new partners have offered workshops to our farmers and producers, others invite us to their facilities to have Farmers' Markets to their population, others open their viewers and constituents so we can promote our products, services and implement our Consumer Awareness Campaign, other provides us with access to local and internet media and others introduce us to new farmers and producers. Working with all of these partners helped us leverage the funds receive and with their continued support we will be able to continue our work.
  - iii. How will they continue to contribute to your project's future activities, beyond the performance period of this FMPP grant? None of these partners receive money from us. All of these partnerships happened because our work complements what they do. They will continue to help strengthen our efforts and support us in the retention process. They provide on-going services that we are not able to provide which will ensure higher probabilities of success. By showing a united front and offering incentives to our local farmers and producers, we will be able to deliver economic opportunities, create jobs, develop support programs, provide access to information and educate on the appropriate technology needed to run their farm more efficiently and effectively. After the hurricane they helped us in the recovering process, especially by getting all donations of seeds we were able to promptly distribute to our farmers, home gardeners and schools.
  
- 5. Are you using contractors to conduct the work? If so, how did their work contribute to the results of the FMPP project? Yes, the Marketing Specialist, the Consumer Awareness Campaign designer, the Agribusiness Guide develop and the Evaluator all played an important part in the accomplishments reached under this grant. The Marketing Specialist recruited and reached farmers and producers and organized and facilitated Farmers Markets and weekly meetings. The Consumer Awareness Campaign designer and the Agribusiness Guide designer were able to complete their assignments in a timely manner and the Evaluator completed two evaluations as proposed.
  
- 6. Have you publicized any results yet?\* We have not publicize final results yet, but we publicize partial accomplishments throughout the life of the grant in our face book page, in various newspaper articles and directly to our farmers, producers and partners.
  - i. If yes, how did you publicize the results? We use our face book page as our main communication tool. We have also been covered by local newspapers and visit regularly TV and Radio Stations.
  - ii. To whom did you publicize the results? To the general public, specifically to entrepreneurs and farmers.
  - iii. How many stakeholders (i.e. people, entities) did you reach? We directly reached and oriented over 6,000 people and over 100 entities.

\*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? We collected information via needs assessments, applications, follow-up forms, monthly/quarterly reports and specific questionnaires and focus groups through the evaluation process.
  - ii. What feedback was relayed (specific comments)? The business incubator is fundamental to develop my business. I am very grateful to have the opportunity to participate in AgrolInnova's programs. I am very grateful for all the support received, we feel like a big family. AgrolInnova and my farm changed my life since we have a large group where we can share things like in a big family. Since I started in agriculture I have been hand in hand with AgrolInnova and the experience has been fantastic in all aspects and the group of farmers has been of a lot of help. This is a great support ecosystem. I have been a great experience and I will recommend it to other entrepreneurs. I would of gotten anywhere with my product if it hadn't been for the incubator. Through the workshops, we received the necessary support for our products. We can always count on AgrolInnova for workshops and Farmers Markets. I wasn't able to start my business until I found CJDCS. With the CJDCS I learned the real way to start a business...I had spent so much money unnecessarily to formalize my business and now I learned it without spending so much. Thanks to the Farmers Markets I have been able to realize that agriculture is a viable industry to stay in and create a job for myself and for others.
  
8. Budget Summary:
  - i. As part of the FMPP 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. 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). Since there are so many informal businesses in Puerto Rico, Farmers Markets are an excellent way to show entrepreneurs that they can sell their products and that formalizing their business is an investment well worth it. The Consumer Awareness Campaign was so well received that farmers are still using the signs and stickers printed, which shows that hard copies or physical materials are needed because they give the participant a sense of belonging and they feel more secure and part of a bigger whole. Developing the Guide was also a great hit as entrepreneurs were able to complete their business plan in their own time in or out the workshop and they had a hardcopy and the "pamphlet" they could review and make changes as they pleased. We also found that finding an evaluator was a really hard task as so many professionals have fled the Island. After the hurricane, our farmers united

more than ever and supported each other, it was so that we were able to open the incubator after two days of the hurricane and able to get to the farm after 4 days.

- ii. If goals or outcome measures were not achieved, identify and share the lessons learned to help others expedite problem-solving: N/A
- 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: The project was pretty easy to administer since we had very clear outcomes and only a few line items in the budget.

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 provide the services offered during this grant and will continue to use the Agribusiness Guide for a long time. We partnered with ECONO Supermarkets and they agreed to print and additional 3,000 guides since they will use them for a high school program. We received approval for a 3-years NIFA grant to train beginner's farmers, ranchers and fisherman so we will be able to continue the work with those funds. We also continue to celebrate Farmers Markets with private donors and continue to provide workshops to entrepreneurs. Finally, we received approval from the International Economic development Council to redo our Strategic Plan based on our new reality after the hurricanes and with the new funding from NIFA.
- 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?