

**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>	September 30, 2014 – September 29, 2016
Authorized Representative Name:	Sara McIntyre
Authorized Representative Phone:	423-493-9155
Authorized Representative Email:	smcintyre@crabtreefarms.org
Recipient Organization Name:	Crabtree Farms of Chattanooga, Inc
Project Title as Stated on Grant Agreement:	Chattanooga's Local Food Program
Grant Agreement Number: <i>(e.g. 14-LFPPX-XX-XXXX)</i>	14-LFPPX-TN-0158
Year Grant was Awarded:	2014
Project City/State:	Chattanooga, TN
Total Awarded Budget:	\$96,400

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.

- I. **Programmatic Goals:**
 - Increase production and consumption of locally grown foods.**
 - Increase public awareness of locally-grown and crafted foods.**
 - Offer educational and networking opportunities to partner farms and related local businesses**

The 2015 and 2016 Grow Chattanooga program was a success overall. We accomplished all of the tasks outlined in the grant, and improved our tactics for managing the program.

We saw an increase in partnership by 2%, from 196 partners in 2014 to 200 partners in 2015. While we were unable to gather data specific to the impact Grow Chattanooga had on local producers' sales and consumers' access to local food, we have gathered a significant amount of positive feedback from the community regarding the *TasteBuds* local food guide and have begun a retrospective analysis of program outcomes with the help of a local firm, Visionario.

- i. **Grow Chattanooga Partner Recruitment and Retention**

Our objective was to increase partnership so that more farms and local food businesses could benefit from the program offerings and marketing platforms. We diversified our outreach efforts by working with regional Extension Agencies to expand our network and reach more potential partners. We also personally visited businesses and farmers markets and followed up with parties who had previously expressed interest but had not applied or were denied in the past. We also hired interns to assist with recruitment efforts. We found it particularly effective to attendance and partner response rates to reach out to partners via phone, directly through visits, and by sending post cards about events.

Partnership increased by 2% from 2014, indicating recruitment growth consistent with that of years' past. Working with partners to accommodate their interests and schedules has greatly improved the response we've had to our trainings. Based on feedback from partners a sample of trainings includes: Buying Local on a Budget, Understanding Farmers Market Regulations, Crop Planning for Multiple Markets, and Starting a Corporate CSA. We have received much more feedback on what partners would like to see offered to them in the future, which demonstrates renewed interest in the program and has provided partners direct, tangible benefits.

- ii. ***TasteBuds Local Food Guide***

The primary and most visible publication of the Grow Chattanooga program is the free *TasteBuds Local Food Guide*. *TasteBuds* connects readers to sources of local food and current information about issues and stories relevant to our local food community. 40,000 copies of the Spring/Summer 2015 issue, 30,000 copies of the Fall/Winter 2015 issue, and 20,000 copies of the Spring/Summer 2016 issue were created.

Our objective was to improve the layout and content of each issue of *TasteBuds* and to make it more widely available in the community through more closely targeted distribution points, and we succeeded. We worked with a Steering Committee, and local writers and photographers to generate content, and local companies to manage the design, printing, and distribution of the guide.

TasteBuds came out on schedule and distribution has been steady. 90% of the spring 2015 issue was distributed, 90% of the fall issue has been distributed, and 68% of the spring 2016 issue has been distributed. Issues not distributed are assembled into collected works bundles that are then used in promotion and recruitment materials.

Feedback on the latest issues has been tremendously positive. Several farmers and farmers market managers reported to us that new customers reported specifically seeking out their vendors and venues because of their presence in the local food guide. Additionally, one of our writers was contacted directly by a reader who was so moved by his article in *TasteBuds* they wanted to personally compliment him on it. And in a gathering of the region's local food stake holders, the President of a local foundation said that no city is a real city until they have a publication like *TasteBuds*.

- iii. ***Downtown Local Food Map***

The *Downtown Local Food Map*, a complimentary publication to *TasteBuds*, is a resource for residents and visitors to find restaurants, food artisans, and markets in Downtown Chattanooga that source ingredients from local farms.

We updated the content and map for the *Downtown Local Food Map* and printed 10,000 copies in advance of the Riverbend Festival and summer tourism season. These were distributed at Chattanooga area events, to downtown hotels, and to area rest stops in order to reach both regional residents and visitors. The map newly includes a newly expanded section with two additional regions outside Downtown: the Northshore and St. Elmo neighborhoods, two parts of town that are close to the city's center and house more partner restaurants and markets. This information increases partner visibility, which increases partner satisfaction with the program, as well as increases public awareness of local foods available in our community.

Distribution of the map was steady and we just ran out of copies in November 2016. Over the course of the program we had multiple calls from downtown hotels and area rest stops requesting more copies, which we prioritized restocking. The feedback we have heard is that the *Downtown Local Food Map* helps reinforce Chattanooga's local food identity, and it increases visitor and resident awareness and perception of the city as a food destination.

iv. **Promoting Community Awareness of local food**

Our objective was to make more Chattanoogaans aware of the value of purchasing local food (for personal economy, the regional economy, and nutritionally), and to increase their ability to find it. We articulated the value messages carefully and made them broadly available through informational booths, updating the *Grow Chattanooga blog*, making media appearances on television, radio, magazine, and newspaper interviews, and in scheduled speaking engagements where we delivered the *TasteBuds* "eating local" messages.

While we are unable to quantify by what percent awareness of local food has increased in the region, we are able to determine that through diversifying our outreach strategy, we have expanded the reach of the *Grow Chattanooga* program messages in the community.

In 2015 the *Grow Chattanooga* website alone averaged 65,012 visits per month and 76,626 page views per month. The highest number of visits and page views were in March with 277,078 and 294,414 respectively. For unknown reasons the months of February, March, and April received anomalously high traffic. In the first three quarters of 2016, the *Grow Chattanooga* website averaged 14,542 visits and 19,759 page views. During just the past three months that traffic has come from over 110 countries.

Through increased exposure, utilization of free and earned media, and diversification of the events attended we reached an even wider audience over previous years of the program. Our partners participating in Farm Tour received additional attention through media promotions. We continue to generate awareness of local food within our community.

v. **Managing the Website**

The *GrowChattanooga.org* website is a portal of information for both partners and the public. It includes a searchable database of farms, products, and services; maps; a blog; houses the partner application registration process; lists profiles of every partner; has the published version of the current *TasteBuds* local food guide available as well as expanded content; and an advertising and sponsorship block.

We updated partner applications and continue to manage registration and partner approval. We improved the *Grow Chattanooga* website by working with partners to fully complete their online profiles so each partner page is as full and informative as it can be. Additional improvements include adding a sponsor block.

We contracted with Tubatomic to complete even more updates, which included redirecting the *growchattanooga.org* domain to display the current *TasteBuds Online* homepage; improving the layout and visibility of the blog; updating the "Shop Local" map to show all partner types and adding a sort function by farms with farm stands, U-Pick, and agritourism opportunities; and evaluating the current functionality and developing a proposal for updating the partner applications for 2017, whilst also making the website more mobile friendly.

Grow Chattanooga also created a CSA Directory, which lists area farms offering Community Supported Agriculture programs. The directory is available online, and can be used as a tool for individuals seeking to join a CSA program to best match their needs and desires to a local offering.

The addition of the sponsor block has created marketable real estate for potential sponsors, and demonstrates to our visitors the support we receive from community partners. The improvements made to the website continue to make the website more user-friendly for partners and the public alike.

vi. **Farm Tour and other fundraising strategies**

The 3rd Annual *TasteBuds Farm Tour* took place September 19 & 20, 2015 and generated over \$1,160 to be used to support the printing and publication of the 2016 issues of *TasteBuds*. Ten farms participated over the course of the 2-day event. 31 passes were purchased in advance for the tour, and more were purchased the weekend of the event. Overall, the farmers seemed satisfied with the event. One partner even made a donation to the program in thanks for having organized an event that led to a successful day selling their products to participants. The 2016 *Farm Tour* was held October 1, 2.

We will continue to hold the *TasteBuds Farm Tour* as an opportunity for area residents to explore our partner farms and gain a better understanding of where their foods come from. Encouraging local residents and visitors to travel the distance between farm and plate. We also believe that it is a marketing and practical benefit to our partner farmers because they can develop new customers, a wider audience, and have the opportunity to “try on” agritourism for a weekend.

Advertising and partner dues comprise the other funds-generating portions of the program. The partner dues are intentionally low in order to make partnership achievable for the parties who are intended to benefit the most: our local food producers, food artisans, community gardens, farmers markets, etc. However, it was determined that it is often best for partners to pay a nominal sum in order to ensure a level of commitment and financial acknowledgement of the services they are receiving. Advertising space is sold in the two print editions of *TasteBuds* each year. The rates are highly reasonable and the target advertiser population is tight and well-controlled by the Program Coordinator to best match the tone, tenor, and audience of the publication. That is to say, preference is always given to locally owned and operated businesses, especially those having to do with food and food production. Advertising continues to be a difficult, time-consuming, and shifting target for us. We hope that with the switch to a heavier emphasis on a digital platform we will find more successes.

II. **Beneficiaries:**

In addition to the below listed measurable beneficiaries, is the attendant network of support systems and companies involved, like processors, marketers, website builders, product aggregators, and local artists and artisans. Additionally, those local companies who work with us to develop and produce the Grow Chattanooga program and its materials are beneficiaries and include such companies as Widgets and Stones, Partnership Marketing Group, Sauers Printers, Aladdin Printing, local writers, local photographers, paid and unpaid interns, and more.

Farm beneficiaries: 100; Restaurant beneficiaries: 36; Resource Organization beneficiaries: 10; Community Garden beneficiaries: 17; Grocery Store beneficiaries: 7; Farmers Market beneficiaries: 16; Food Artisan beneficiaries: 14; Intern jobs: 4

- i. Four direct jobs were created for communications interns.
- ii. Several jobs were retained both at Crabtree Farms and in our community: 1 Crabtree Programs Coordinator, 2 Programs Assistants, and the Crabtree Executive Director. Additionally, the project retained jobs for the 2 contracted individuals who distribute *TasteBuds*, the designers at Widgets and Stone, the printers and their sales reps at Sauer’s Group, and the web developers at Tubatomic.
- iii. Several indirect jobs have been created through this project, which include the photographers contracted to obtain stock photography, the designer of the *TasteBuds Farm Tour* poster, and the writers who submitted content for *TasteBuds*.
- iv. Two markets have moved locations in order to accommodate more customers and a third will move to a new location January 2017 in order to accommodate more customers and more vendors.
- v. Of the 3 new markets represented at the “Meet a Market” event held in 2015, only one succeeded in establishing themselves. The Lookout Farmers Market Red Bank Market has been met with a strong customer base and a loyal following of farm vendors.

In general, consensus amongst farmers at this point is that they are satisfied with the number of markets they currently attend/have the option to attend, and when informally asked whether or not they would like to see new markets established, many have told our staff they would not have enough time, product, or energy to attend another.

- vi. We are unable to make conclusions about market sales increases at this time as none of the Market Managers surveyed provided results for this question.
- vii. In 2015 the total number of partners increased by 1% to 202 partners with 102 farms and 13 food artisans participating. In 2016 the total number of partners decreased to 154 partners with 89 farms and 11 food artisans participating. This coincided with the opening of the new Harvested Here Food Hub which also provided producers promotional and media opportunities and over that period we lost our Programs Assistant and spent many (recruitment) months looking for, acquiring, and training a new assistant. Additionally, I believe it marks the beginning of changes in our community and preferred media (from print to digital) that we must carefully look into and change our strategies and programming to match.

III. Expansions:

We approached more new businesses directly by introducing them to *TasteBuds* and asking them to distribute them to their customers. This included rural areas of Middle Tennessee, North Alabama, and North Georgia. Grow Chattanooga reached new ethnic groups by hosting La Paz, a Latino outreach and resource organization, for farm tours of Crabtree Farms that were offered in Spanish and advised La Paz as they explored the concept of a new market for their members. Through targeted booths at health fairs, elementary school fairs, *TasteBuds* distribution to parents and teachers of Title I schools attending educational field trips to the farm, and classroom visits we reached more low income/low access populations. *TasteBuds* distribution increased in low access rural communities via direct delivery to community gathering spaces and businesses as well.

IV. Community Partners:

Grow Chattanooga worked with Agricultural Extension Agents in Tennessee, Georgia, and Alabama, regional businesses, the Harvested Here Food Hub, the Chattanooga Area Food Bank, the Center for Profitable Agriculture, the Alabama Sustainable Agriculture Network, Coordinated School Health, La Paz of Chattanooga, and the Hamilton County Soil Conservation District to broaden our reach in the community.

With their help we were able to access and assist more farmers and share resources widely through their constituent networks. We asked them to share their wealth of knowledge and resources with our partners, as well, through trainings. Together we have gained access to a wider demographic of individuals, were able to recruit new partners, and access feedback from stakeholders in their communities on the impacts of Grow Chattanooga. We have co-hosted programs and workshops, assisted directly with projects and ventures in their organizations, and cross promoted and co-promoted a wide variety of activities and products.

We continue to work together, and in many instances have been partners for many years. It is our hope that several of our Grow Chattanooga community partners will join us in envisioning the future of the Grow Chattanooga program in our region and help us to plan further for program sustainability and funding.

V. Contractual Work:

We contract with Partnership Marketing Group for distribution; Widgets and Stone for design of *TasteBuds*, Della Wheeler for design of the *TasteBuds Farm Tour* poster and hang tag; Grant Dotson, Seth Shaffer, and Shana Dubois for stock photos; paid writers (not on Crabtree staff) contributed articles for *TasteBuds*; Tubatomic was contracted for website maintenance; Adobe Business Catalyst for website hosting; Constant Contact and Mail Chimp for communicating with partners and the public; Sauers Group for the printing of *TasteBuds*; and Aladdin Printing for printing of informational brochures; Custom Werks, Print Tree, EZ Up, and Graphic Solutions for Grow Chattanooga collateral and a custom printed tent canopy and tablecloth. Their work enables us to create high-quality, professional collateral, materials, and services that expand beyond the scope of Crabtree Farms' resources, schedules, and skills.

VI. Publicized Results:

We have not publicized results to our stakeholders yet. We will send a letter to partners, stakeholders, and supporters in early 2017 apprising them of updates, results, and changes in the program as it strives to become self-sustaining. With the loss of our Program Coordinator, first Program Assistant, and most current Program Assistant turned Program Coordinator we are a bit behind in communications and analysis and are still working to make changes toward fiscal sustainability in 2017 and beyond.

VII. Feedback:

We sent a survey to all partners directly in the mail and via email. We also asked partners who came to workshops to take the survey. Collected partner results are few, as only 9 partners took the survey. Additionally, we sent out a broad, community-wide Survey Monkey survey through Facebook, our website, our monthly Crabtree Farms membership e-newsletter, and through printed copies, in order to solicit responses at booth events and at the Farmers Markets. We gathered 118 community responses. This feedback will inform trainings we will offer in 2016 and help us identify areas we can provide even more support and resources for our partners.

Partners have said:

- *Grow Chattanooga* has impacted their business by helping them seek out new markets (4)
- The visibility of their farm has increased (2)
- They have diversified their crops (2)
- One partner wishes to see *TasteBuds* in more places in the community
- Another said “Love all that you do- and want to be a part of this.”
- “My first wholesale order was placed by a customer who found my information through *TasteBuds*. I’m so impressed and happy with my online partner page.” -Ivanna Patterson, Lavender ‘N’ Rust Herb Farm (Farm Partner)
- “*TasteBuds* is the only publication I advertise in anymore. Customers frequently tell me that they saw my ad in *TasteBuds*, and I haven’t heard mention of any of the other publications that I’ve advertised with.” – Geraldine Charton, La Cabriole Restaurant (Restaurant Partner)

Community Member Feedback:

- Respondents were asked to rate the importance of several statements regarding local food, and 96% strongly agreed that supporting the local economy is important to them, 94% strongly agreed that local family farms in business is important to them, 90% strongly agreed local food is fresher than non-local food, 79% strongly agreed local food is better for the environment than non-local food, 72% strongly agreed knowing how their food was grown is important to them, and, lastly, 49% strongly agreed knowing the farmer who grew their food is important to them.
- When asked why more people don’t purchase local food: 64% responded that the cost is too high, 45% responded local food is hard to access, 46% said they don’t know where to find it, 55% said it’s not a priority, 27% said they don’t have time to cook with fresh ingredients, 2% said taste was the reason.
- These results provided insight into what our community prioritizes and understands about eating local and will help inform future education, outreach, and *TasteBuds* articles in 2016.
- “I just wanted to send you a ‘fan letter’ for the fantastic Fall/Winter 2014 edition of *TasteBuds* that found its way to me via friends who were traveling through TN and picked up a copy for me (I live in NYC). I have read it cover to cover and have especially enjoyed the articles ‘On the Health of Soil’ and ‘BEEyond the Honey Bee’. These are timely and relevant topics that I’m inspired to see are making their way - in such a stylish and egalitarian way - to the public. Kudos to you for this amazing and aesthetically pleasing work. It is inspiring me to want to visit Chattanooga and soon!” -Martin Bryan
- “Last week I picked up my first *Taste Buds* at a rest stop near Chattanooga – what a great publication! Wish I lived in your area, but was just passing through.” -Pam Kaufman, Iowa
- “Jumping on Chattanooga’s recent farm-to-table movement, *TasteBuds* gives residents a guide to finding locally crafted foods and lists upcoming farmer’s markets, foodie events, and CSA programs.” – Matthew Monagan, writer for New York Magazine’s Weekend Getaway

VIII. 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. \$32,926.85 was generated through advertising sales in *TasteBuds* and an additional \$6,200 was generated through partner dues and donations for a total of \$39,126.85. These funds were used to supplement the costs of personnel to run the program in 2015 and 2016 and the remainder was used to partially support the program in 2016. The entire amount needed to run a full year of the program in 2016 was not generated. Moving forward the intention is to find a version of the program which is both beneficial and self-sustaining financially.

IX. Lessons Learned:

i. **Grow Chattanooga Partner Recruitment and Retention**

The biggest challenge we faced with recruitment was getting businesses to complete their applications thoroughly and in a timely manner. Oftentimes, we were able to reach them by phone or email, they would express interest in applying, but would not subsequently complete their applications. We frequently followed up with potential partners two to three times before they took the time to apply. The most effective strategy we employed to get partners to reapply was by traveling directly to them - whether at the farmers market or their business locations - and standing with them while they reapplied in person.

The problem with these tactics is that they are very time consuming. Additionally, due to increased personal visits, we saw a drop in partners utilizing the website application forms to update their photos and information. It seems evident that the application and reapplication processes are experienced as cumbersome and onerous to our partners. As such, we will continue to adjust our application materials, reapplication processes, and recruitment strategies.

Some possible solutions include: offering incentives to those who complete the application online, not requiring current partners to reapply, and adjusting the application form or user interface to shorten the time spent and burden on the applicant. The more we can avoid personally chasing down individuals and steer them to online tools or decrease their burden, the more effectively and wisely we can spend our time and resources.

ii. ***TasteBuds Local Food Guide***

TasteBuds has become a trusted and recognizable source of local food information in the community. The publication continues to improve as the design team becomes familiar with our goals and readership. Soliciting articles from local writers has also helped to improve the publication, as they bring in fresh ideas for content and diverse voices for sharing it.

The two biggest challenges we face with *TasteBuds* are storage and targeted distribution. In an effort to conserve program funds, we elect to have the printing done in one bulk run and the entire order delivered to Crabtree Farms all at once. This has forced us to come up with creative solutions for unloading, storing, and distributing the guide. A goal for next year is to improve our storage system, which will help with the daunting task of unloading and storing the guide, and help to minimize the risk of damage to the product.

Though we have worked with a professional distribution company for many years, we continue to struggle to have our guide distributed to locations appreciable distances off the major highways and interstates of the region. Additionally, our distribution agent is responsible for taking many publications out on his routes and as we are his last loading stop, the number of issues taken on each leg of the route is lower than we wish.

As a result, we have spent appreciable amounts of time communicating with partners to identify ideal locations near them and in their counties for distribution. Then forging relationships with those locations and finally, driving ourselves to the “interior” distribution spots and delivering *TasteBuds* and magazine racks. We then work closely with the partner/s in the area – having them keep an eye on the volume of issues and reporting when it is time for us to make another delivery.

Our last tactic for getting *TasteBuds* more widely distributed to the neighbors and communities directly surrounding our partners is to bring large volumes of the guide to farmers markets or arrange meeting spots and hand off large quantities of *TasteBuds* to each individual partner. They then make the guide available at their markets, locations, or bring copies to local stores and restaurants in their areas for distribution among the general public. While we are proud of our grassroots efforts, and the creativity and willingness of our partnership to help with distribution, this is an area where improvements with professional distribution services must be made.

We have learned over time that the Spring/Summer issues of *TasteBuds* are more popular with residents and visitors as it heralds the coming of the season of favorite fruits and veggies such as strawberries and tomatoes. We intentionally stepped down the number of issues printed in the fall because the interest in local food and gardens wanes during the fall and winter months and we do not wish to have a large surplus. Further, our distribution opportunities diminish as farmers markets and other distribution points slow down for the season.

Similarly, though a great number of Spring/Summer issues can be moved through distribution to visitors centers and truck stops, we don't feel that those efforts penetrate the core of our targeted audience and city in the same way that our grassroots efforts have been able to do. We intentionally stepped back production volume of the Spring/Summer 2016 issue in order to acknowledge our new distribution targets, which included discouraging our distributor from far flung distribution locations simply for the sake of distribution numbers. This enabled the distribution company to focus on closer, more targeted, and more "interior" distribution locations. As a result of continued professional difficulties, we have developed and grown our grassroots distribution strategies. These, according to our partners, are achieving greater penetration of the community and more broad local recognition of the product and programs.

iii. *Downtown Local Food Map*

We decided to scale back on the number of copies we printed in order to conserve resources and better target our distribution. 10,000 copies is a suitable amount for our purposes, as it is meant to be a supplement to the *TasteBuds Local Food Guide*.

iv. *Promoting Community Awareness of local food*

The blog was updated frequently by Crabtree Farms staff and interns. We posted the blog to our Crabtree Farms Facebook page, which helped to bring awareness to the blog and drove traffic to the new posts. Topics were relevant to seasons and timely events, which helped to keep interest in the website strong. Our online Grow Chattanooga presence has easier metrics built in to quantify and track reach, it also provides an ongoing, freshness that, we think, encourages repeat visitors and possibly maintains a longer effect on the target audience than a print periodical with discrete issues may be able to achieve. More research and better tools for measuring the outcomes of a widespread, free, local food program are needed. Regardless, we do know that we have a strong online presence and that Chattanooga's local food program is receiving world-wide attention.

v. *Managing the Website*

There is still work to be done to make our website more current with the times, but with the help of Tubatomic we should be able to successfully modernize the website and keep it functioning at its peak. Our preference is to build a site using a platform that doesn't have to be updated by an outside business as the funds involved in managing, maintaining, and improving our website are cumbersome and not conducive to smooth future growth with limited funds.

vi. *Farm Tour*

Having fewer farms participate helped drive a greater percentage of participants to each farm. This resulted in the participating farms reporting a more positive experience. However, a number of farm tourists suggested that we increase the number of farms so they may have more choices to visit.

Due to farming pressures and religious observances, we have also encountered the interesting situation where half the farms only opted to participate one day of the weekend and the other half opted to participate the other day. That further limited farm tourists' choices and led to some confusion and frustration. As we plan for the next *Farm Tours*, we intend to target our farm recruitment to include farmers that will be willing to participate both days. Additionally, we are constructing a route map which features clusters of farms that are closer together geographically, thus enabling the farm tourists to spend more time visiting and less time driving, which will also hopefully lead to the added benefit of participants visiting more farms overall.

X. *The Future:*

Grow Chattanooga has become a staple of our region since 2011. It is a clearinghouse for information that truly connects the people of the region with their local foodshed. No other regional program works with both growers and consumers to strengthen our local economy and to make local food more accessible. Nor is there a program more responsive to partner needs for supportive programs and public education.

By accessing more potential Grow Chattanooga partners and spreading the message of local food to more diverse communities in the region, we are able to make small farming a more realistic livelihood for families in the community, and eating local more common amongst consumers.

A retrospective analysis of the outcomes of our local food program will enable us to determine which efforts have the greatest impacts and which have become outgrown as awareness of local food and farming has grown. These results will enable us to further narrow the scope of our program to best fit the needs of our region, hone our craft, and use the available resources efficiently where they are most effective.

As Chattanooga grows and develops into the food tourism destination the local food partners and number of movement constituents will likely become more numerous and potentially unwieldy to manage. We run the risk of losing the momentum that a cohesive message and educational platforms can provide. It is important, now more than ever, to spend time in discussion, analysis, and collaboration to ensure what was a nascent movement in 2010 grows into a strong collaboration of partners that furthers both the economic needs of the local food producers as well as the desires of area residents and visitors.

Consequently, as Chattanooga rises in the minds of the nation as a destination for food, outdoor recreation, music, and emergent technologies, the size of our city and its surrounding towns will grow. With population growth and urbanization comes an expansion into rural areas, increased property values, and increased pressures on small farmers and landowners to sell for development. If small agriculture and local food is part of what makes our region economically viable, diverse, and resilient, and creates the conditions in which a growing number of people want to live, then it is also incumbent upon us as the hub of our region's local food movement and program, Grow Chattanooga, to help protect those lands and convey the importance of working landscapes both today and in the years to come.

Recommendations for future activities and an outline of next steps or additional research that might advance the project goals.

a. Determine the amount of money currently being spent on local food in Chattanooga.

- Hire a local non-profit organization, Visionario, to conduct an economic study and retrospective analysis of the history and impacts of our local food program.
- Once that figure is determined, we will improve the TasteBuds 10% Challenge project and adjust strategies to increase public awareness of the power of their food dollar.

b. Research the real and perceived boundaries that prevent access to local food to understand how better to overcome them.

- Hire Visionario and work with other partners in the community to survey area residents on their perceptions, access, and barriers to local foods.
- Develop an outreach strategy to better overcome perceived boundaries, and work with local city governments to address the real boundaries preventing area residents from accessing local food.

c. Determine what real impact Grow Chattanooga has had on increasing the number of farms that have started or stayed in business since the program's inception.

- Improve our surveying strategy to achieve greater partner participation in surveys. Work with county governments, and new census data, to identify areas where agricultural operations are struggling to stay in business, and areas where prospective agricultural operations could successfully take root.

d. Gather stakeholders to discuss the current state of the regional food movement, the needs, strengths, perceived accomplishments, and future needs/strategies of the region as regards the local food economy and agriculture.

- Possibly work with Visionario on this project as well in order to gather quantifiable, thorough, data.
- Develop goals and strategies based upon the results collected.

e. Begin moving to a greater web-based presence

- Find and build a website that we can maintain in-house
- Transfer the print magazine to an online magazine
- Develop new advertising contacts and learn how digital advertising differs from print advertising structures