

**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

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

<b>Report Date Range:</b> <i>(e.g. September 30, 20XX-September 29, 20XX)</i>	September 30, 2015 – September 29, 2017
<b>Authorized Representative Name:</b>	Liz Vallette
<b>Authorized Representative Phone:</b>	832-384-5697
<b>Authorized Representative Email:</b>	<a href="mailto:liz@plant-it-forward.org">liz@plant-it-forward.org</a>
<b>Recipient Organization Name:</b>	Plant It Forward
<b>Project Title as Stated on Grant Agreement:</b>	Plant It Forward Farm Stand Program
<b>Grant Agreement Number:</b> <i>(e.g. 14-FMPPX-XX-XXXX)</i>	15FMPPTX0029
<b>Year Grant was Awarded:</b>	2015
<b>Project City/State:</b>	Houston, Texas
<b>Total Awarded Budget:</b>	\$86,915

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: \_\_\_\_\_; Email: \_\_\_\_\_; Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

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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: The Plant It Forward refugee farmer will increase his/her gross sales by ~\$5,000 annually by adding farm stands as a sales channel.

a. Progress Made: One of our farmers, Farmer Roy Nlemba, came close to achieving the goal of earning an additional \$5,000 annually through farm stand sales, earning \$4,768 in 2016 and \$3,045 in 2017. Two other farmers, Farmer Sarment Louamba and Farmer Alimasi Toto, earned approximately 50% of the goal. Farmer Christine Kengue’s earnings were lower; however, she has begun to see an uptick in earnings after moving to a new farm stand location in the fall of 2017. We experienced two unusual weather events in 2017 – a two-day long hard freeze and catastrophic flooding – both of which destroyed a majority of the crops on our farms. The weeks lost recovering, replanting, and regrowing equated to lost opportunity for our farmers to be utilizing the farm stands. We remain confident that consistent, reliable weekly farm stands will, over time, become a solid source of additional income for our farmers.

b. Impact on Community: Many of our supporters and customers are motivated to be involved with us through a desire to support refugees and local farmers in becoming economically self-sustaining. The customers enjoy seeing the farmers doing brisk business at the farm stands and regular customers are motivated to return weekly in order to support the livelihood of their farmer.

ii. Goal/Objective 2: Neighbors will have an opportunity to purchase fresh local produce from the farm stands at least once a week.

a. Progress Made: This goal was achieved at four of our six farm stand locations -- so far -- and we expect to have 100% goal achievement in the coming year.

b. Impact on Community: We observed that operating a farm stand on a weekly set schedule over time cultivates a regular and growing customer following. Word of mouth and social media postings attract increasing numbers of customers who come to rely on the weekly, local produce and social interactions with neighbors and the farmers. The two remaining farm stands are slated to be repositioned at more optimal locations so they can enjoy the success of the others.

iii. Goal/Objective 3: Community will be built as neighbors gather at their local farm stands and attend neighborhood farm events.

a. Progress Made: We can say with certainty that this goal has been achieved at three of our farm stand locations – Farmer Roy’s farm stand in the Montrose neighborhood, the farm stand at our Westbury farms, and Farmer Christine’s

new farm stand at our warehouse in the Willow Meadows neighborhood. We are applying lessons learned to the other three farm stands to ensure they are also equally successful.

b. Impact on Community: Our two most successful farm stands – at Montrose and our Willow Meadows warehouse -- have become fixtures in their neighborhoods and customers count on them as a weekly source of fresh produce. Those farm stands serve as community focal points where residents gather to socialize with one another, greet the farmers, and purchase their weekly groceries. Our Westbury location has been a great location for hosting occasional events centered on the farm stand, with Girls Scouts and other community groups helping to compel the community to turn out.

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: 0
  - ii. Number of jobs retained: 8
  - iii. Number of indirect jobs created: 0
  - iv. Number of markets expanded: 6
  - v. Number of new markets established: 6
  - vi. Market sales increased from \$0.00 to \$14,454.50.
  - vii. Number of farmers/producers that have benefited from the project: 8 farmers benefited over the program’s lifetime.

The following is a breakdown of reported revenues from the eight participating farmers conducting retail sales at farm stands.

<i>Reported Revenue by Farm Stand</i>	Farm Stand 1	Farm Stand 2		Farm Stand 3				Farm Stand 4	Farm Stand 5	Farm Stand 6
Location:	St. Thomas	Westbury		Fondren				St. Paul	Warehouse	Bellaire
Farmer:	Roy	Alimasi	Sarment	Adrien	Albert	Christine	Constant	Guy	Christine	TBD
TOTAL for 10/30/15 – 10/29/17	\$ 7,813.00	\$ 2,632.00	\$ 1,394.00	\$ 859.00	\$ 724.50	\$ 170.00	\$ 371.00	\$ 228.00	\$ 155.00	TBD
Days Open during reporting period	58	35	34	18	13	9	5	2	4	TBD
Average Sales per Day during reporting period	\$ 134.71	\$ 75.20	\$ 41.00	\$ 47.72	\$ 55.73	\$ 18.89	\$ 74.20	\$ 114.00	\$ 38.75	TBD

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?

Prior to operating farm stands under this FMPP grant, our customers could only purchase our produce via our weekly farm share program or at farmers' markets. The farm stands allowed us to connect directly with the communities surrounding our farms and increase our customer base.

Over the course of the program we began accepting SNAP at each of our farm stand locations, allowing us to reach the new demographic of low-income community members.

**Farm Stand 1 / Montrose (Farmer Roy):** Farmer Roy has taken full ownership of his farm stand and has dozens of regular customers. He is fantastic at building customer relationships, holding regular hours and providing high quality produce. He is consistently making over \$100 a week when he has enough product and the weather cooperates.

**Farm Stand 2 / Westbury (Farmers Alimasi and Sarment):** While events continue to draw a good crowd to Westbury, regular weekly farm stand hours are inconsistent and foot traffic is slow. Therefore, we've decided this location is not an optimal location for conducting regular retail business. We are considering moving this farm stand to another neighborhood where customer traffic and interest – from both our farmers and customers -- will be higher. Alternatively, we are exploring options for subsidizing lower prices for the low-income residents in the immediate vicinity to encourage more customer foot traffic.

**Farm Stand 3 / Fondren (Farmers Adrien, Albert, Christine, Constant):** There has been much farmer turn-over at this location; however, we feel it holds great revenue-generating promise as it is located off a busy thoroughfare. Farmers Adrien and Albert departed our organization in spring 2017 as alumni and have formed their own farming business elsewhere. Farmer Constant decided in summer 2017 to begin holding farm stand hours weekly at this location, while Farmer Christine has relocated her farm stand activities to our new warehouse farm stand location. We feel confident, that with some stability and consistency of retail activities from Farmer Constant, this farm stand location will become a focal point for the surrounding community in the spring of 2018. We also intend to pursue SNAP subsidies here in spring 2018 to engage the neighboring community.

**Farm Stand 4 / St. Paul (Farmer Guy):** This farm stand location had to close due to St. Paul Presbyterian Church moving to a to-be-determined location after their land was bought out by a developer. In the meantime, Farmer Guy moved to our Fondren location and this farm stand is awaiting relocation to an amenable location, one exciting option of which is the Veterans Affairs Medical Center in downtown Houston.

**Farm Stand 5 / Warehouse (Farmer Christine):** The new farm stand location at our warehouse is showing signs of becoming a profitable stand and a neighborhood fixture. Within a few short weeks we are seeing regular customers emerge, and they are telling their neighbors about us. Farmer Christine's produce quantity was limited after the floods in late summer, but we expect spring 2018 to hold a bounty that will excite the neighboring community. She is earning \$60 – \$130 on a weekly basis.

**Farm Stand 6 / Bellaire (TBD):** Our final farm stand was completed in summer 2017 and was

positioned at the Nature Discover Center in the walkable and affluent neighborhood of Bellaire. The late summer flooding and subsequent crop damage delayed our plans to open this farm stand location. Our anticipated opening date will be spring 2018 once the farms are back in full production. We have high hopes for this location, with it being family-friendly, walkable, on a park site and near another park and several churches. We have the staunch support of the park director and we believe a Sunday farm stand will be highly productive.

4. Discuss your community partnerships.

i. Who are your community partners?

Our farm land partners over the program period have included Braeswood Assembly of God Church, Westbury Civic Association and Westbury Community Garden (WCG), University of St. Thomas, and St. Paul Presbyterian Church. These partners host our farms as well as generate customers for us from their memberships, and we expect this support to continue for the coming years. Sustain Juicery, Culture of Health Advancing Together (CHAT), DrummingTogether.org, Bike Barn Houston, a local Girl Scout troop, and Health Museum Houston were event supporters. They supported various events at farm stands through donations in kind, activities, and promotion. Neighborhood management groups and city management districts have also expressed support and intent for more robust partnerships in the coming year. We expect our partners to continue to support our farm stand activities into the foreseeable future.

ii. How have they contributed to the overall results of the FMPP project? See above.

iii. How will they continue to contribute to your project's future activities, beyond the performance period of this FMPP grant? See above.

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

Our farm stands are constructed by a local wood worker. Minor modifications have been made to the original design by the contractor to help tailor the farm stands to better serve the farmers and customers.

6. Have you publicized any results yet?\*

i. If yes, how did you publicize the results? We have not publicized results of the program at this time, but intend to do so in our 2018 annual report. We feel the results are a bit sensitive as they reveal income data about our farmers, so we want to be deliberative and appropriate about sharing the information.

ii. To whom did you publicize the results? Results have not yet been publicized.

iii. How many stakeholders (i.e. people, entities) did you reach? N/a

\*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?

We annually conduct a customer survey to collect general input on the quality of our products and service.

ii. What feedback was relayed (specific comments)?

- “This is a fantastic initiative. Keep up the great work.”
- “I love Plant It Forward and love having a relationship with the people who grow my food!”
- “We love Plant-it-Forward and recommend it to everyone.”
- “I love what PIF is doing and will continue to spread the word to friends and family!”

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:

ii. Did the project generate any income? Yes.

a. If yes, how much was generated and how was it used to further the objectives of the award? A total of \$14,454.50 was generated for our farmers through produce sales at the farm stands. The farm stands have allowed the farmers to supplement their income with a new revenue stream, as well as connect the farmers with their local communities. Consistent farm stand presence increases sales and perpetuates the growth of farm-based community interactions.

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).

We had two major takeaways from this program: 1) Location, location, location, and 2) Consistency.

Just as with anything dealing with real estate, the location of the farm stand is vital to success. We need access to a customer base that is motivated to and able to routinely buy fresh produce. Our farmers charge premium prices for their sustainably grown produce, which is not affordable for some of the communities immediately neighboring

our farms. A concurrent subsidy program for SNAP beneficiaries may have increased foot traffic from lower income customers.

Equally important is the consistency of sales hours and reliability of the farmer. The farm stand must be open on a set schedule, not sporadically or at the farmers' convenience. Customers do not keep coming back if the farm stand is not open when it is scheduled to be opened. Our most successful farm stands were those located in walkable, engaged neighborhoods and manned by reliable farmers who stuck to their farm stand schedule. Often, it takes patience to develop a customer following at a new location. The farmers should expect to invest six to twelve weeks cultivating a customer base, and they must be consistently on-time and on-schedule.

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

Gain farmer buy in on the program during the planning stages. They should understand the goals and objectives, as well as the budget of the program. They should help come up with and execute the sales schedule and marketing efforts. This will make them better informed and more likely to cooperate with achieving those goals.

#### 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 intend to act on our lessons learned and continue to operate all six of our farm stands in the manner currently in place. We are training a new class of urban farmers, and farm stand retail operations are a part of the curriculum. Already, we have several trainees who excel at managing farm stands and who appreciate the value of this activity as a viable source of revenue for an urban farmer. We look forward to them becoming fixtures in the neighborhoods where they will eventually be assigned to farm.

- 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? n/a