

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:	October 2015-September 2017
Authorized Representative Name:	Jessica Price
Authorized Representative Phone:	775-391-9617
Authorized Representative Email:	jessica@oxbow.org
Recipient Organization Name:	Oxbow Center for Sustainable Agriculture and the Environment
Project Title as Stated on Grant Agreement:	Strengthening the Sno-Valley Farm-to-School Supply Chain
Grant Agreement Number:	15LFPPWA0003
Year Grant was Awarded:	2015
Project City/State:	Carnation, WA
Total Awarded Budget:	\$98,681 (not including \$40,680 in non-federal match funds)

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: _____

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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, 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: Improve the capacity of Riverview and Monroe schools to procure, incorporate and promote locally-produced food in school meals.

Across both districts, the major barriers to incorporating locally-grown produce in school meals included:

- Federal procurement rules, restrictions, and paperwork burden
- Food safety requirements and concerns
- Limited kitchen facilities and preparedness to handle fresh produce, especially of sizes and shapes different from federal specifications
- Communication challenges with farmers – multiple farmers versus “one-stop shopping,” farmer responsiveness, mutual comprehension
- Uncertain supply (quality, quantity) making forward meal planning difficult

Project activities focused on addressing these barriers, at least partially.

a. Progress Made:

Major outputs and outcomes related to Objective 1 include the following:

- Sno-Valley Farm-to-School: School-side Assessment and Strategies (select findings summarized below and full report can be found at <http://www.oxbow.org/about/grants/>)

District	Monroe	Riverview
Number of schools:	8	5
• High School (grade 9-12)	1	1
• Middle School (grade 6-8)	2	1
• Elementary School (grade K-5)	5	3
Number of students	7,002 ¹	3,247 ²
Race/Ethnicity:		
• Percent White	71.1% ¹	78.3% ²
• Percent Hispanic/Latino of any race(s)	19.6% ¹	13.0% ²
• Percent Black/African American	1.1% ¹	0.5% ²
• Percent American Indian/Alaska Native	0.7% ¹	0.5% ²
• Percent Asian	2.3% ¹	2.8% ²
• Percent Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	0.2% ¹	0.3% ²
• Percent Two or More Races	5.0% ¹	4.6% ²
Percent Qualified for Free or Reduced Meals	24.3% ¹	14.8% ²
Participating Federal Meal Programs	National School Lunch, Breakfast, and Summer Meal Programs	National School Lunch and Breakfast Programs
Average Lunches Served Per Day (percent total number of students)	3,500 (50%)	1,000 (30%)
Foodservice Operation	Food Service Management Company	District Nutrition Services Department

District	Monroe	Riverview
	(contractor to the district)	
Operation Style	On-site kitchen at each school; food prepared at each school each day	On-site kitchen at each school; at secondary school kitchens, food prepared at each school each day; high school kitchen works as central kitchen, preparing in bulk for elementary school kitchens (satellite kitchen). Elementary school kitchens heat and serve
Salad Bar	At least one at each school cafeteria; fresh fruit and vegetables prepared on site and served daily	At least one at each school cafeteria; fresh fruit and vegetables prepared and served daily
Definition of 'local' for farm to school program	Within a day drive from the district	Tier 1: Within 50 mile radius from the district Tier 2: State of Washington
Farm to school activities	Annual participation to Taste Washington Day, Food Day and whenever feasible Planned and coordinated by the Dining Services	Annual participation in Taste Washington Day, Harvest of the Month (monthly feature of local product). Planned and coordinated by the Nutrition Services, in partnership with Future Farmers of America
Produce procurement	Mostly via produce contract; kitchen managers place orders directly to the produce vendor. FSMC requires GAP certification	Mostly via produce contract; kitchen managers place orders directly to vendor. No GAP certification requirement as of SY2015-16
Farm to school special procurement	By the director of Dining Services; inquire directly to the farms and co-op in the area	By the Nutrition Services Supervisor; inquire directly to farms and coop. Uses DoD Fresh and USDA Pilot for Unprocessed Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program.

¹ Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction Washington State Score Card – Monroe School District, 2015-16.

² Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction Washington State Score Card – Riverview School District, 2015-16.

- Technical assistance and support to the school districts for Harvest of the Month days and facilitated purchasing through the SVFC.

This involved participation in HOM days, supply of educational and promotional materials used in the lunchroom, and access to Harvest of the Month Resource Portal tool for the Snoqualmie Valley (tool can be found on <http://www.oxbow.org/about/grants/>).

- A F2S Info Packet and Guide designed for use by school district. The guide presents succinct information on Snoqualmie Valley produce and an availability timeline, coop farms and farmers in the region, federal purchasing restrictions and possibilities, and on farmer pledges to sustainable growing practices and food safety procedures (info packet can be found at <http://www.oxbow.org/about/grants/>).

b. Impact on Community:

Resources from the project provided helpful F2S assistance and material support to the school districts' food services staff and, through the Snoqualmie Valley Farmers Coop, to local producers. Consistent with school districts across the country, such dedicated resources to the districts in support of F2S activities and local purchasing was essential. Without them, the long-term continuation of F2S at the same level of intensity remains in question. We are nevertheless encouraged by F2S evaluation findings from school districts that suggest an association between years of experience implementing F2S programs and the intensity (breadth, depth, and commitment) to F2S.¹ Given its important role in facilitating and streamlining local produce purchases in school districts, the long-term success of the Snoqualmie Valley Farmers Coop will also be a key factor in ensuring meaningful and enduring community F2S impact.

- ii. Goal/Objective 2: Increase readiness and capacity of five or more local producers to sell their products to schools, including assisting local farms to obtain GAP certification

a. Progress Made:

Presentations made:

- Focus on Farming, GAP vs. FSMA: What You Need to Know, 20 people
- SnoValley Tilth at 21 Acres, Food Safety For Small Farms, 12 peoples
- SnoValley Tilth at Carnation Farm after Farmer to Farmer WA conference, Demystifying Food Safety Requirements For Small Farms, 15 people

Each of these presentations explained the difference between GAP and FSMA, focused on the biggest practical challenges that small farms face when meeting these regulations, and presented the advantages to small farms by formalizing food safety practices.

Working Sessions held and attendance:

- Year 1: Six 2-hour sessions with 2 farms. Both farms completed Food Safety Manuals.
- Year 2: Two 4-hour sessions with about 6 farms. One farm completed a manual and two more were very close at the end of the project period.

¹ Vernon, E., Price, J., and Kumagai, S. (in press). Farm to School Intensity Levels: A Systematic Review and Proposed Measurement Tool. *The Journal of Applied Business and Economics*

Three farmers completed Food Safety Manuals. 30 water tests were completed at 7 different farms. No farms submitted GAP applications by the end of the project period, but one farm (Oxbow) has planned to do so in the 2018 season.

An extensive food safety toolkit was developed and used to facilitate the farmer training and their preparation of Food Safety Manuals. Final editing, formatting, and assembling of the toolkit components is underway for user-friendly access digitally. Toolkit components include:

Table of Contents

Toolkit use instructions

Traceability tools:

- Customer contact list
- Recall information form
- Product information form
- Contact information form
- Recall Notification
- Product retrieval form
- Follow-up form

Food safety procedure tools:

- Master checklist
- Harvest box cleaning record
- Knife sanitation record
- Packing house cleaning record
- Schedule checklist
- Cooler temperature log
- Field risk log
- Handwashing sign – English
- Handwashing sign - Spanish
- Manure application log
- Packing house risk log
- Spray training checklist
- OSHA injury and illness packet
- Land use history WSDA site map
- FSMA checklist
- FSMA SOPs 2017

Useful resources:

- FSMA Guidance for Small Farms
- FSMA Water Requirements
- GAP Water Factsheet
- NOP Compost Factsheet

b. Impact on Community:

While the farmers benefited from the food safety workshops and training supported by this project, farms in our project area generally do not have a legal or financial impetus to become GAP certified.

FSMA does not legally obligate farms in the project area to adopt comprehensive because every farm except one (Oxbow) meets the standards for the "modified exemption." The only food safety rules required by the modified exemption are to keep sales records to prove that your business qualifies for the exemption; and to post a sign with the name of business, address, and contact information at the point of sale.

At this time, all of the farms that participate in this project direct market all or almost all of their crops. Few if any direct markets demand GAP certification. Unfortunately, the very limited size of school purchases at this time and the delivery requirements represented more of a burden than an incentive. There is still much work to do to make this a viable market for the farms in our project area.

Under these circumstances, our conclusion is that it is in the best interest of smaller, direct market farms to develop food safety manuals and gradually implement the practices as it makes sense to do so. These farms should avoid higher cost practices such as frequent water testing, packaging changes, chemical costs, and audit expenses until presented with a financial or legal reason to do so.

iii. Goal/Objective 3: Strengthen and build relationships between schools and local producers

Despite several attempts to bring farmers to schools and school food services' staff to farms, due to time constraints in both sectors, very few of these attempts succeed.

a. Progress Made:

Although minimal progress was made towards this objective, Oxbow hosted a Riverview food services staff planning meeting, participated in Monroe's annual community farmers market events, and took steps to link F2S with our farm-based environmental education program by working with Monroe kindergarten teachers to provide healthy, locally grown snacks (carrots, sweet peas, turnips).

c. Impact on Community:

The impact on the community from this project is minimal. However, linking farm-based environmental education programs to F2S efforts promises to elevate visibility and impact of both as children share their experiences and exposure with the families.

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: NA
 - ii. Number of jobs retained: NA
 - iii. Number of indirect jobs created: NA
 - iv. Number of markets expanded: F2S market for Snoqualmie Valley farmers
 - v. Number of new markets established: NA
 - vi. Market sales increased by \$insert dollars and increased by insert percentage%. NA
 - vii. Number of farmers/producers that have benefited from the project: 20, through sales to schools through the SVFC
 - a. Percent Increase:
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?
No
4. Discuss your community partnerships.
 - i. Who are your community partners?
Riverview School District, Monroe School District, Snoqualmie Valley Farmers Cooperative (SVFC), SnoValley Tilth (SVT), and local farms. WSDA Small Farms Team has collaborated on GAP certification training.
 - ii. How have they contributed to the overall results of the LFPP project?
 - The school districts, SVFC, and SVT continued to trial, learn from and retool purchasing procedures through SVFC
 - SVT continues to keep area farmers abreast of GAPs and F2S opportunities under this project, to collaborate with and support the project's institutional markets coordinator, and to actively learn from what works (and doesn't) for later replication and scale up
 - Farms participated variously in preparing for GAPs certification, selling produce to schools directly and indirectly (through the SVFC), and in supplying information and materials we used to develop profiles and Who Grew It materials
 - We also collaborated closely with WSDA Small Farm Team collaboration.

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

Riverview and Monroe school districts have gained valuable experience implementing F2S activities, especially around Harvest of the Month, and both have expanded their F2S activities in the course of the project. Food service directors have expressed enthusiasm to support local farms and to increase the quantity and quality of foods served to their students. Their continued implementation of expanded F2S activities will support the project's goals in the future. Furthermore, although challenges remain, the SVFC is much better prepared to receive and process orders from school districts and have taken steps to expand their contacts with school districts in the Seattle area beyond Riverview and Monroe. If the co-op succeeds and remains in business, the work done under this project to promote and facilitate F2S sales will also support this project's objectives in the future.

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

The project used a consultant-nutritionist who had deep experience in F2S in Washington State. Shoko Kumagai, F2S consultant, supported the project by providing ongoing technical assistance and guidance to the school districts' food service directors, fielding their questions about procurement policy, facilitating their first purchases through the SVFC, collating and providing Harvest of the Month tools and information, and supporting Harvest of the Month activities. Kumagai also completed the initial assessment in each school district.

- 6. Have you publicized any results yet?* No
 - i. If yes, how did you publicize the results?
 - ii. To whom did you publicize the results?
 - iii. How many stakeholders (i.e. people, entities) did you reach?

*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? No
 - i. If so, how did you collect the information?
 - ii. What feedback was relayed (specific comments)?

- 8. Budget Summary:
 - i. As part of the LFPP closeout procedures, you are required to submit the SF-425 (Final Federal Financial Report). Check here if you have completed the SF-425 and are submitting it with this report:
 - ii. Did the project generate any income?
 - a. If yes, how much was generated and how was it used to further the objectives of the award? No

- 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).

There is great school, community, and farmer interest in advancing F2S. Throughout and the project and from all stakeholders we received nothing but enthusiastic support. However, as described under the objectives sections above, F2S procurement is greatly limited by federal procurement policies and by the lack of financial incentive for small farms in the Snoqualmie Valley to become food safety certified. That said, we remain hopeful that a strong aggregate organization – like the SVFC – will help to steadily increase F2S sales until such time that the policy environment is more favorable for small farms to sell to schools.

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

Our biggest disappointment was with objective 3, to bring farms and schools more closely together. In retrospect, given the time constraints of farmers and food services staff we realize this objective was unrealistic. In lieu of getting “farmers” in the cafeteria of classrooms, we recommend supporting efforts to increase garden and farm-based environmental education programs that rely on outdoor and environmental educators to supplement the F2S procurement goals. In this instance, efforts would be focused on linking the two activities.

- 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 nature and intensity of F2S activities depend greatly on a school district’s kitchen infrastructure and capacity to process fresh foods – embrace the reality that F2S will look very different from school to school, district to district
 - Food service directors are not necessarily caught up on the latest federate policy and procedures pertaining to local food purchases – take time to assess knowledge/familiarity level and to assist food service staff in understanding and taking advantage of policies aimed at supporting F2S (e.g., USDA micro-purchasing policy precluding the need for competitive bids)
 - Despite some federal procurement flexibility (through the micro-purchasing policy) and food service director enthusiasm for F2S, many remain reluctant to purchase locally-grown vegetables due to food safety concerns as well as to real or perceived relative lack of convenience compared to more conventional food distributors – understand food service staff concerns and needs and work closely with them to develop trust and systems they need to increase local food purchases

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.

Oxbow will continue to sell to and support the SVFC as well as directly to school districts. At local forums, we also will continue to advocate for F2S in area schools and will offer additional support through our children's programming. Furthermore, we will also continue to advocate for support more farms in the region to pursue food safety certification, starting with our own GAP application in 2018.

- 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?

Dedicated F2S staff playing a similar role to our F2S consultant, who is assigned to supporting a small to moderate number of school districts, might be worth piloting and monitoring the outcomes on creative solutions to F2S challenges.