



**Oklahoma State Department of Agriculture,
Food and Forestry
Specialty Crop Block Grant Program
Final Report**

Contacts

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Introduction

The Oklahoma State Department of Agriculture was awarded a 2007 USDA Specialty Crop Block Grant of \$107,188.11. With this grant we were able to provide grant assistance to many nonprofit organizations that promote the increase of specialty crops production in Oklahoma. The grant was used to create a billboard campaign, an educational brochure, and to assist Oklahoma Grown Farmers' Markets through grants that were used to advertise and improve market facilities.

Outline

Promotion:

A promotional campaign for specialty crop producers and farmers' markets has been a significant problem due to the markets limited revenue stream. Oklahoma Grown Farmers' Market managers have been vocal on trying to create a billboard campaign during Oklahoma's peak produce season to promote Oklahoma Grown products at farmers' markets. The need for a billboard campaign is important in advertising to large masses. By implementing a Buy Oklahoma Grown campaign we hope to increase demand of products at Oklahoma Grown farmers' markets by 15 percent. The educational brochure was used to help promote Oklahoma Grown products. The brochure contained recipes, cooking tips, and health benefits of eating a diet rich in fresh fruits and vegetables. The brochure was offered at Oklahoma Grown farmers' markets and was also be distributed at approximately 80 extension offices throughout Oklahoma.

Grants:

Oklahoma Grown Farmers' Market managers are constantly looking for ways to increase demand for farmers' markets. By offering grants, we were able to help managers continue to build and expand their markets through advertising, displays, promotion, and facility improvements. There has been an increase in farmers' markets selling only Oklahoma Grown products during the last few years. In 2005, there were 20 Oklahoma Grown Farmers' Markets and today there are 30 farmers' markets selling 100 percent Oklahoma Grown products. The goal was to continue the increase of retail outlets for Oklahoma producers by assisting Oklahoma Grown Farmers' Markets with grant money.

Urban Renewal:

As part of this urban renewal project, we worked with Oklahoma State University and downtown Oklahoma City to build an Oklahoma Grown urban farmers' market. The market was open on Wednesdays and offered a large array of Oklahoma Grown specialty crop items. This market proved to be beneficial to both producers and consumers by offering a market in a location available to a large mass of people during the week. In this area, there are many issues dealing with the access to fresh produce. With access to an Oklahoma Grown

Farmers' Market, healthier alternatives are offered to people who live and work in this area of Oklahoma City. This market is helping to revive downtown Oklahoma City by drawing more consumers to the area and is helping to promote business with our new urban revitalization projects. We also wanted to provide a model for other urban areas throughout the state.

How the issues were approached

Promotion:

The goal of this project was to promote Oklahoma Grown products. The objective of this project was to create a billboard campaign to be implemented during Oklahoma's peak produce season and develop an educational brochure aimed at informing the public about the benefits of eating fresh fruits and vegetables available at local farmers' markets. The billboards helped remind current and potential customers that the Farmers' Markets were open and had high quality fresh produce for sale. Site selection of the billboard was based on the location of the market, the cost of the billboard and availability of billboards. We wanted the billboard to be as close to the Farmers' Market as possible but wanted to keep cost at a minimum.

Grants:

The goal of this project was to assist market managers increase demand by building and expanding their markets through advertising, displays, promotion, and facility improvements. To accomplish this goal, the project proposed awarding grants to 100% Oklahoma Grown Farmers' Markets to be used for advertising, promotion, displays and general upkeep. Of our 100% Oklahoma Grown Farmer Markets, 19 have received a \$2,500.00 grant that was used for advertising and market improvements. Two grants for \$1,250.00 were awarded to new farmers' markets. Many of the Farmers' Markets used their grants to purchase outdoor signs, newspaper advertisements and personal canopies for their Farmers' Markets.

Urban Renewal:

The urban renewal project that was funded with the help of the USDA Specialty Crop Block Grant went to help develop the Oklahoma State University/ Oklahoma City Downtown Farmers' Market. This grant was awarded to Oklahoma State University working in concert with Downtown Oklahoma City. They used the grant to promote and develop their market through various forms of advertisement such as signage newspaper and radio. The goal of this project was to create demand at a premiere market place for producers to sell locally grown food items to urban residents and downtown business professionals during the workweek. The project proposed using grant money to help promote the Downtown Oklahoma City Farmers' Market through many different promotional projects. These projects included advertisement on the radio, in

newspapers and in magazines. The grant was also used to purchase signs, posters, and tomato magnates to give to customers.

Goals

Promotion:

The goal of this project was to provide a campaign in the state of Oklahoma to educate consumers about the benefit of buying fresh food items at Oklahoma Grown Farmers' Markets. Goal was to increase sales at current Oklahoma Grown Farmers' Markets by 15 percent.

Grants:

The goal of this project was to increase the number of vendors participating and selling products at Oklahoma Grown Farmers' Markets, thus expanding the volume of specialty crop producers statewide.

Urban Renewal:

The goal of this project was to create demand at a premiere market place for producers to sell locally grown food items to urban residents and downtown business professionals during the workweek. We hoped to increase the number of specialty crop growers due to increase of demand in areas that need urban renewal and also to provide an example of how to start an urban farmers' market for others in the state.

Results/ Progress toward expected measurable outcomes

Promotion:

The billboard and educational brochures campaign were well received by the managers, vendors and customers of the 100% Oklahoma Grown Farmers' Markets. The billboard campaign allowed Oklahoma Grown Farmers' Markets to advertise on 14 billboards across the state of Oklahoma from May to October. The 14 Oklahoma Grown Farmers' Markets that received a billboard saw an average increase of sales of 23 percent. The educational brochure was developed to inform consumers about the benefits of eating a diet rich in fresh fruits and vegetables available at the Oklahoma Grown Farmers' Markets. Approximately 15,000 of these brochures have been distributed to Oklahoma County Extension Offices, Farmers Markets, the Oklahoma State Fair and the Tulsa State Fair. (Examples of billboards and brochure attached.)

Grants:

With the 2007 USDA Specialty Crop Block Grant, the Oklahoma Department of Agriculture, Food and Forestry was able to provide grant assistance to many Oklahoma Grown Farmers' Markets that promoted the increase of specialty crops production in Oklahoma. Data collected from the market managers show a measurable increase in sales and production has been achieved. The markets that received the grants have seen a 24 percent increase in sales and a 37 percent increase in number of vendors. There were also five markets added in the year 2007. This brings the number of 100% Oklahoma Grow Farmers' Markets to 30. The Owasso Farmers' Market is a good example of the positive results that were accomplished because of the grants. The Owasso Farmers Market received a grant of \$2,500.00 and with that they created a website (www.owassofarmersmarket.com), 5,500 flyers in the local paper, posters with market information to be distributed at key local businesses, and two 18"X24" double faced signs showing market information. Owasso has increased its number of vendors from 5 in 2006 to 16 in 2007 and gross sales went from \$8,000.00 in 2006 to over \$11,000.00 in 2007.

Urban Renewal:

The Oklahoma State University/ Oklahoma City Downtown Farmers' Market did not meet our expectations for gross sales or number of vendors. The reasons for this shortfall were weather and change in the market manager. This year Oklahoma experienced a record amount of rainfall in the spring and summer months. This severely limited produce production and also kept customers away from the market. There was also an untimely change in the market manager. There was no market manager in late winter when a manager was needed to recruit vendors for the market. Even with these setbacks the Oklahoma State University/ Oklahoma City Downtown Farmers' Market for the nine market days had on average 14 vendors and gross sales of \$24,448.34. Also positive relationships with the businesses in downtown Oklahoma City were achieved.

Lessons Learned

Two of the most important lessons that were learned were that it is very important to have a prepared food vendor at a weekday Urban Farmers' Market. This was very helpful in attracting customers on their lunch hour. We also learned the importance of promptly replacing a market manager quickly. Replacing the manager quickly allows for the least amount of disruption in the Farmers' Market.

Are you eating enough?

Less than 10% of Oklahomans are getting the recommended amounts of fruits and vegetables.

Needs differ from person to person based on age, gender and activity level.

As you age, the recommendation increases for nearly all age groups.

The more physically active you are, the greater your need for fruits and vegetables.

For more personalized recommendations, go online to www.fruitsandveggiesmatter.gov.



How to eat more fruits and vegetables

Here are some simple ways to add more fruits and vegetables to your day:

- Add fresh or frozen berries to yogurt or granola
- Add vegetables such as tomatoes, onions, mushrooms or peppers to your eggs
- Have a fruit or vegetable as a morning or afternoon snack
- Add fresh or frozen vegetables to a casserole or pasta
- Use canned and frozen fruits and vegetables when fresh are not available
- Ask for less cheese and more vegetable toppings on pizza
- Add an extra vegetable to dinner
- Eat a sweet piece of fruit for dessert
- Visit your local farmer's market for the freshest fruits and vegetables available



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It's Fresh. It's Local. It's Good

... and Good for You!



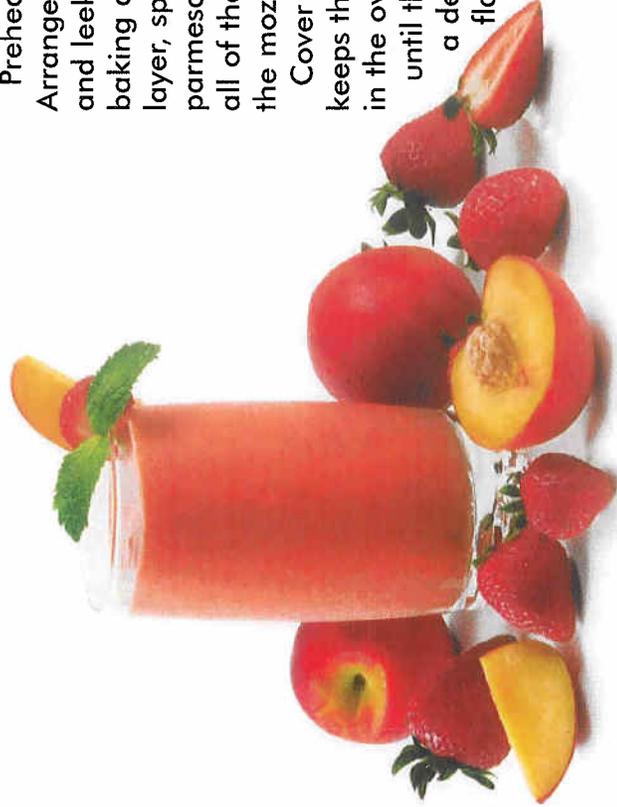
www.okgrown.com

See delicious Oklahoma Grown
recipes inside!

Benefits of fruits and vegetables

- Fruits and vegetables are low in calories and high in fiber, which may help individuals control their weight.
- Fruits and vegetables may decrease the risk of developing certain chronic diseases such as heart disease, stroke, high blood pressure, type 2 diabetes and certain types of cancer.
- Fruits and vegetables are an excellent source of essential vitamins and minerals, especially folate, potassium, vitamin A, vitamin C and vitamin E.
- Fruits and veggies also contain many phytonutrients such as lycopene, lutein and beta-carotene.

— Landon N. Norton, RD/LD, Oklahoma Fruit and Vegetable Nutrition Coordinator



Baked eggplant with tomatoes and basil

- 2 medium to large eggplants, sliced into 1/8" thick rounds
- 3 large tomatoes, sliced into 1/4" thick rounds
- 3 leeks, chopped
- 15-20 basil leaves, whole
- 1/2 cup fresh mozzarella, grated
- 1/2 cup parmesan cheese, grated
- salt and pepper to taste

Preheat the oven to 375 degrees F. Arrange the eggplant, tomatoes, basil and leeks in layers in a medium sized baking dish (with a lid). On top of each layer, sprinkle a dash of salt, pepper and parmesan cheese. When you have used all of the ingredients, cover the top with the mozzarella.

Cover the baking dish with a lid as this keeps the moisture in the pan while it's in the oven. Bake for 35-45 minutes, or until the eggplant is very tender. This is a delicious celebration of summer's flavors!

— Recipe courtesy of Emily Oakley, Three Springs Farm

The following guidelines apply to Oklahomans who are moderately active.

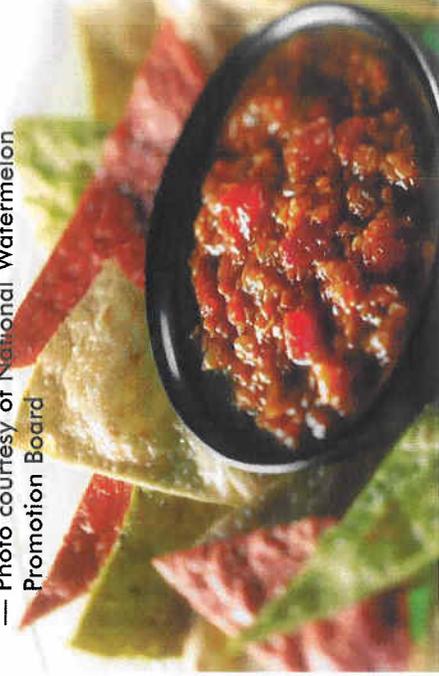
Age Groups	Fruits	Vegetables	Recommendations
Girls 2-8 years	1 cup	1-1.5 cups	
Girls 9-18 years	1.5 cups	2-2.5 cups	
Boys 2-8 years	1-1.5 cups	1-1.5 cups	
Boys 9-18 years	1.5 - 2 cups	2.5-3 cups	
Women 19-50 years	1.5-2 cups	2-2.5 cups	
Women 51+ years	1.5 cups	2 cups	
Men 19-50 years	2 cups	3 cups	
Men 51+ years	2 cups	2.5 cups	

Five and ice salsa

- 3 cups watermelon, seeded, chopped and drained
- 2 tablespoons lime juice
- 2 tablespoons green onion, chopped
- 2 tablespoons jalapeno pepper, finely chopped
- 1/2 cup green pepper, chopped
- 1/2 teaspoon garlic salt

Combine and mix all ingredients. Cover and refrigerate a few hours. Serve with sour cream and corn or tortilla chips.

— Recipe courtesy of Oklahoma Vegetable Growers Association
 — Photo courtesy of National Watermelon Promotion Board



OWASSO



FARMERS' MARKET

	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEPT	OCT
Apple							
Asparagus							
Beets							
Blackberries							
Blackeye Peas							
Blueberries							
Broccoli							
Cabbage							
Cantaloupe							
Carrots							
Cauliflower							
Cucumbers							
Cut Flowers							
Eggplant							
Eggs							
Garlic							
Green Beans							
Greens							
Herbs							
Honey							
Lettuce							
Okra							
Onions							
Peaches							
Pears							
Peas (English, Snow, Snap)							
Peppers							
Plants (Bedding, Potted)							
Potatoes							
Pumpkins							
Radishes							
Raspberries							
Rhubarb							
Spinach							
Squash (Summer, Winter)							
Strawberries							
Sweet Corn							
Sweet Potatoes							
Tomatoes (Green, Red)							
Tomatillo							
Turnips							
Watermelon							



Stop in this week for fresh, local produce, meats, eggs, plants, herbs, breads, flowers, soaps and so much more!

**Wednesdays, 8am-noon
at the Owasso YMCA
(8300 N Owasso Expy)**

&

**Saturdays, 8am-noon
at Rejoice Church
(Hwy 169 and 106th St N)**

For more information
www.owassofarmersmarket.com
owassofarmersmarket@yahoo.com
 or call (918) 694-3490



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