

**2014**

\$73,700 to the Michigan Land Use Institute, Traverse City, MI, to expand the 10-counties Taste the Difference local food marketing program.

**Final Report**

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

The final performance report summarizes the outcome of your FMPP award objectives. 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 your assigned grant specialist to avoid delays. Should you need to mail your documents via hard copy, contact FMPP staff to obtain mailing instructions: FMPP Phone: 202-720-4152; Fax: 202-720-0300

<b>Report Date Range:</b>	October 1, 2014 – September 30, 2015
<b>Authorized Representative Name:</b>	Bill Palladino
<b>Authorized Representative Phone:</b>	231.941.6584
<b>Authorized Representative Email:</b>	<a href="mailto:bill@localdifference.org">bill@localdifference.org</a>
<b>Recipient Organization Name:</b>	Michigan Land Use Institute
<b>Project Title as Stated on Grant Agreement:</b>	Expanding Michigan's Taste the Local Difference Marketing Program
<b>Grant Agreement Number:</b>	14-FMPPX-MI-0089
<b>Year Grant was Awarded:</b>	2014
<b>Project City/State:</b>	Traverse City, MI
<b>Total Awarded Budget:</b>	\$73,500

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: \_\_\_\_\_

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.

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: **Enhance to Taste the Local Difference® brand to make it recognizable to consumers who are seeking to buy local food and farm products.**

- a. Progress Made: TLD made significant progress to enhance our brand in 2015.

1. We grew the program from a single pilot retail partnership (Tom's Food Markets), to a broad grouping of retail markets across northwest Lower Michigan. We expanded our pilot program with Tom's Markets from two stores to all six of their stores in Traverse City, Acme, Northport and Interlochen. We also added new partners with six Oleson's Food Markets in Traverse City, Charlevoix, Petoskey and Manistee. Other retail partners joining TLD in 2015 included: Anderson's IGA in Glen Arbor, Evergreen Market in Williamsburg, Grain Train Natural Foods in Petoskey, Burritt's Fresh Market in Traverse City, Oryana Natural Foods in Traverse City and Edson Farms Natural Foods in Traverse City.
2. TLD was very successful in raising funds to drive this work. As a result we were able to upgrade the intended TLD Coordinator from a contract position to a full-time position. This change was noted in our budget change request in August 2015. We were able to hire Tricia Phelps as our full time TLD Coordinator in November 2014. This hire made a significant difference in TLD's ability to move this business model forward. Tricia was able to concentrate her time on serving our new retail business partners and in creating market-sensitive materials for use in retail, restaurant, and institutional point-of-sale environments.
3. TLD was able to realize its goal of collaborating with some of the region's outdoor festivals to make an impact on local food sales at these mass gatherings. In July of 2015 we partnered with the National Cherry Festival, which brings 200,000 people to Traverse City to make the Sarah Hardy Downtown Farmers Market a central feature of the festival itself. We took on an organizational and marketing role to ensure the many festival-goers were able to experience the local food presented by the scores of farmers at the three market days during festival week. We also worked with the Traverse City Film Festival, founded by filmmaker Michael Moore, to manage all of their parties during the course of their five day festival. Each vendor was encouraged and incentivized to use local fresh ingredients in its contributed food during the week. This work culminated in late September 2015 as TLD rolled out a new Certified Local Food Event branded certification program. This is a fee-based certification for

events wishing to connect their brands to local food.

4. TLD used media partnerships to great effect in 2015. We were able to trade advertising in our new TLD Local Food Guide with broadcast, print, and online media businesses, putting TLD's brand in front of hundreds of thousands of consumers.
5. 2015 saw the most advanced changes in TLD's website, apps, and online tools. We completely revamped our website to be more consumer friendly, while building in a sophisticated back-end to support our growing list of participating farms and food businesses.

b. Impact on Community:

1. We are still measuring the economic impact of these new relationships, but will continue to monitor the work with these partnerships. It is a challenge to collect the local food sales data we had intended to report. (See page 10 of this report.) Our license agreements with retail stores include a clause to have them provide sales data on local foods. We are still collecting this data. Anecdotally, TLD's impact can be measured by its ubiquitous visible presence inside each of these stores. We are using our innovative marketing materials to differentiate local food on store shelves and in the produce aisle.
2. Hiring a full-time coordinator allowed TLD to have a regular impactful public presence in the community. Tricia Phelps became the public face of TLD in northwest Lower Michigan, writing regular articles in publications, doing media interview, and building stronger relationships with our farm, business and consumer partners.
3. Our role in bringing local food to festivals had a visible influence during the days of each festival.
4. Our media impact can be measured in the power of our brand's identity in the communities we serve. TLD has become a well-known, go-to, brand for consumers to seek when shopping for food.
5. The TLD website houses our searchable online database of farms and food businesses. We grew our listings from 565 in 2014 to over 689 in 2015, a 21% increase in participation.

ii. Goal/Objective 2: **Execute a sustainable business plan for Taste the Local Difference™ marketing program:**

a. Progress Made:

1. As stated above we grew our total participation 21% in 2015. We did this by attracting new farms and businesses to the program. We also

made a significant change in the number of farms and businesses paying to participate.

2. Paying farms grew from 30 in 2014 to 65 in 2015. Paying retail stores and value added businesses including restaurants, breweries, distilleries and wineries grew from 70 in 2014 to 125 in 2015.
3. We initiated our first TLD license program in 2015. This program demands that retail stores, value added producers, and wholesale distributors pay for the ability to use TLD's brand to help sell more local food.
4. We made another significant change in moving away from our map-based food guides. In 2015 we partnered with MyNorth publishers of Traverse—Northern Michigan's Magazine to produce a high-quality regional magazine. Our ad sales grew from \$8,500 in 2014 to \$35,000 in 2015. We also transitioned from seeking corporate sponsorships to a brand license model. This makes it difficult to measure 1:1 growth in each category, but as a whole the TLD program grew its advertising and licensing programs (earned income) from \$117,000 in 2014 to \$212,000 in 2015.

b. Impact on Community:

1. Our move to a business orientation pushed TLD to become less dependent on grants and donations, while simultaneously proving that the TLD brand has true value in the community. In return the business creating local food were able to sell more because of the products and services offered by TLD. Producing a high-quality magazine as our annual food guide put this material into the hands of more consumers than ever before. We printed 35,000 copies with a 100% distribution rate.

iii. Goal/Objective 3: **Build Systems for Protecting Brand and Measuring Success**

a. Progress Made:

1. The development of our brand license agreements were the control point for this goal. Use of the TLD brand is now tightly controlled by individual licenses to each business. Use of TLD branded materials, and inclusion in TLD media marketing are determined by the limits of each license. Included in each license agreement are requirements for licensees to report sales on a regular basis for all products represented under the TLD brand.

b. Impact on Community:

1. The impact on the community of the license controls is demonstrated by increased sales of local produce and value-added foods in the retail setting. In Tom's, Oleson's and Anderson's markets, for instance, almost no local produce was available in the produce sections of these stores.

Now with TLD's license agreements the stores are encouraged to purchase local as there is a substantial set of point of sale materials available to differentiate and promote the products.

<http://www.localdifference.org/tld-partners/>

iv. Goal/Objective 4: **Strengthen regional food system coordination:**

a. Progress Made:

1. Bill Palladino, TLD's Director, continued to serve as chair of the NW Michigan Food and Farming Network (FFN) in 2014/2015. The network has the goal of "20% Local Food by 2020." At the FFN Summit in 2015 the network published its first report to the community, a 60 page full-color document featuring 55 stories from 40 authors covering the breadth of Northwest Michigan and its food and farming sectors. <http://mlui.org/ffn2015>.

b. Impact on Community:

1. The work with the NW Michigan Food and Farming Network in 2015 has had a huge impact on coordinating the many otherwise isolated efforts of FFN partners. By focusing on it's 20% by 2020 goal and five specific objectives Network partners continue to have individual impact on the communities they serve while always seeing the bigger picture through connections with the FFN. <http://foodandfarmingnetwork.org>. TLD's increased ability to raise funds also allowed us to commit to hosting a full-time (40 hours a week) VISTA service worker to help manage Network activities.
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, 20\_\_). Include further explanation if necessary.
  - i. Number of direct jobs created: 1
  - ii. Number of jobs retained: 2
  - iii. Number of indirect jobs created: 2
  - iv. Number of markets expanded: 1
  - v. Number of new markets established: 3
  - vi. Market sales increased by \$95,000 and increased by 81%.
  - vii. Number of farmers/producers that have benefited from the project: 689
    - a. Percent Increase: 21%
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?
  - i. We grew our farmer customer base by reaching out into more rural communities in 2015. Our ten county coverage area is difficult to manage. With the addition of a full-time coordinator we were able to provide deep outreach into more of our communities that typically have less access to services.

- ii. In 2015 we also signed on our first expansion community in Washtenaw County, Michigan. This comprises the urban populations of Ann Arbor and Ypsilanti. These are our first truly urban populations for TLD coverage and as so include a much higher density of low income/low access populations.
- 4. Discuss your community partnerships.
  - i. Who are your community partners?
    - a. Our partners include: Michigan Land Use Institute, Michigan State University Extension, MyNorth—Traverse Magazine, Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy, Grand Traverse Conservation District, Michigan State University, Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, Traverse Bay Economic Development Corporation, North Central Michigan College, Northwestern Michigan College, Northwest Michigan Council of Governments, Oryana Natural Foods Market, Cherry Capital Foods, USDA, Black Star Farms, James Bardenhagen Farm, Maple Crest Farm, Head Start, Northwest Michigan Community Action Agency, Traverse Bay Poverty Reduction Initiative, Great Start Traverse Bay/Manistee Collaborative, Traverse City Area Chamber of Commerce, Grand Traverse County Health Department, Benzie-Leelanau District Health Department, Munson Medical Center, Northern Michigan Diabetes Initiative The Washtenaw County Office of Community and Economic Development, and many individuals.
  - ii. How have they contributed to the overall results of the FMPP project?
    - a. This work involves creating and maintaining strong relationship throughout the food and farming community. It also requires pushing TLD products and materials into the consumer’s view. Our partners help us to create an effective social mission, serving the food and farming communities, and help us to create relevance in the business community. We frequently use our partners as advisors and as true partners to achieve mutual goals. Sometimes this involves TLD hosting and participating in meetings, using our partners to help us ascertain community needs through surveys, focus groups, and forums, or getting feedback from business professionals on how to better reach consumers.
  - iii. How will they continue to contribute to your project’s future activities, beyond the performance period of this FMPP grant?
    - a. These partner relationships are a vital part of our ongoing work and we will continue to interact with them moving forward. In 2016 our emphasis is on market expansion. We will be looking to our partners to assist us in breaking into new markets.
- 5. Did you use contractors to conduct the work? If so, how did their work contribute to the results of the FMPP project?
  - i. With only two full-time staff TLD uses a collection of contractors to help us realize our work. In 2015 we utilized contractors to help create our branded marketing materials,

design and publish our magazine, perform data entry, and develop our expanding technology system.

6. Have you publicized any results yet?\*
- i. If yes, how did you publicize the results?
  - a. Marketing is part of our work. We have created many types of publications including a monthly online blog, regular newspaper articles, and our annual TLD Local Food Guide.
- ii. To whom did you publicize the results?
  - a. Our geographic emphasis has been the ten counties of northwest Michigan. We distributed 35,000 copies of our 48 page magazine in this region. Our online publications reach a list of over 3,000 each month, and our newspaper contributions (depending upon the publication) have distribution of between 25,000 and 25,000 copies.
- iii. How many stakeholders (i.e. people, entities) did you reach?
  - a. We estimate that in 2015 TLD's publications and materials in physical form reached over 200,000 individuals. We have attached numerous items to this document.

\*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?
    - a. We collected feedback in the form of surveys and focus groups.
  - ii. What feedback was relayed (specific comments)?
    - a. Feedback from our surveys and focus groups provided us with the clear direction for publishing a magazine-format food and farming guide. This was a risky proposition as it was a complete format change from a well-known product. The results proved that the feedback was accurate.
    - b. The focus groups also showed us that we had not clearly defined our audience for our work. This feedback helped us understand that we needed to create separate materials for the different audiences we were trying to influence. We now assign our materials a specific audience prior to design. These include the general tourist population, the agri-tourism population, retail consumers,

online consumers and retail/wholesale businesses. It is a lesson that has helped us create a successful business model.

- c. The focus groups also helped us clearly define our mission with in-store promotional materials. "When I shop, I don't have time to read the fine print. If you want me to buy something, make it big and colorful, or I won't see it."

#### 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?"
  - a. If yes, how much was generated and how was it used to further the objectives of the award?
    - i. The original project costs totaled \$110,200. We were able to more than double the projected income for the project to \$226,000. This was done through a combination of private donations, small grants, contracts, and advertising and license income.

#### 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).
  - a. This project was very successful. Our original idea of selling more advertising was catapulted to a different level when we created the TLD magazine concept. We were able to sell out our available ad space to the point that we are growing the publication from 48 pages in 2015 to 68 pages in 2016.
  - b. Finding enough additional project income to increase the part-time coordinator position to full-time likely had the most significant impact on the project. By hiring a well qualified individual to manage the regional aspects of the project it allowed the director to focus on creating a solid business plan and expanding the program beyond its original 10 county borders.
  - c. Challenges come in managing cash flow. Our income was limited mainly to the spring and summer, putting us in a cash flow crunch for part of the year. Our 2016 business plan provides a detailed cash flow strategy to help mitigate this issue in the future.
  - d. One of the most difficult and enduring challenges for us is in measuring the quantity of local foods sold. This is a data collection challenge on many fronts. The places that hold the data (retail stores and distributors) think of the data as

proprietary in nature. This is also data that is difficult to find using existing sources like USDA Ag Census. The language and measurement criteria of local food systems is a complex and complicated mix of units, issues of scales, and of definition.

- ii. If goals or outcome measures were not achieved, identify and share the lessons learned to help others expedite problem-solving:
  - a. Record keeping can be the biggest challenge with a grant such as this. It requires sophisticated accounting and budget management. The time commitment to get this right is always underestimated.
- 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:
  - a. Keep your grant administrator well informed of changes before they happen. Our experience with the USDA administrator for this project was the best of any state or federal grant we have ever worked with before. She was direct, and quick to respond to either telephone or email requests.

#### 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.
  - a. This is one of the most important outcomes of this grant project. We are about to launch Taste the Local Difference® into its own independent business that will act as a "social enterprise" of its parent nonprofit. This new business structure will allow TLD to move faster, at the speed of the market, to serve our customers and accomplish our goals. To realize this we have authored an in depth business plan and secured a line of credit from an area banking institution to help with start-up cash flow.
  - b. TLD is expanding quickly. We have already secured a contract, via and RFP process, with the Washtenaw County Office of Community and Economic Development to replicate the TLD program in that county. We are modeling this project in other communities as well. As of November 12, 2015 TLD has also signed on economic development agencies in northeast Michigan (11 counties) and the Upper Peninsula of Michigan (15 counties) which will add up TLD's total coverage area to 37 counties in 2016. Our business plan calls for statewide expansion by 2017.
- 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?

- a. It's important enough that I will cut and paste the comment from section 9 I d, above:

"One of the most difficult and enduring challenges for us is in measuring the quantity of local foods sold. This is a data collection challenge on many fronts. The places that hold the data (retail stores and distributors) think of the data as proprietary in nature. This is also data that is difficult to find using existing sources like USDA Ag Census. The language and measurement criteria of local food systems is a complex and complicated mix of units, issues of scales, and of definition. "

USDA is well positioned to lead this change so that local food system can begin to understand how to easily talk about measuring their economic impact. This is a story that needs to be told so that farm, food, and agricultural communities can be valued fairly for the economic benefit they bring.

## What is a Taste the Local Difference® Partner?

Taste the Local Difference® (TLD) Partners include:

- Farms
- Farmers Markets
- Specialty Food Producers
- Wineries
- Breweries
- Distilleries
- Retailers
- Restaurants



To become a TLD Partner, businesses must sign-up for a listing. During the sign-up process businesses update contact information and essentially create a public profile for themselves. They are prompted to sign the TLD Pledge which ensures an open and honest exchange of information between producer and consumer. It's our value-proposition to consumers.

Payment is required from all businesses to become a TLD Partner except for Farms & Farmers Markets, who receive the benefit of creating a listing for free. For all the rest of our local businesses, TLD requires a minimum of \$150. This yearly fee includes multiple benefits highlighted in this package. An affordable investment to highlight your products in-stores with Taste the Local Difference® marketing materials that will set your product apart from the rest.

Take a look through the materials in this package and make note that these marketing tools will highlight only TLD Partners in licensed retail stores across Michigan. TLD Retail Partners who purchase a license receive the benefits of this growing library of marketing tools and support. The TLD brand is an identifier for consumers and it benefits both retailer and producer by highlighting these products and increasing their sales.

In addition to the marketing materials noted here, a TLD Partner receives their listing in the 2015 Taste the Local Difference Guide publication and a customizable public profile on the TLD Smartphone Application and Website.

Taste the Local Difference® specializes in selling local food and libations. We consider all the aspects of the food system, aiming to strengthen relationships that are already built and making the connections that are often missed.

# Taste the Local Difference® Shelf Talkers

## Shelf-Talkers for Retail Stores, Farms, and Farmers Markets

One of our key strategies to help sell more locally grown and made food is to first differentiate local products from others where consumers shop.

TLD has offered a collection of branded shelf-talkers for over a decade. We have five shelf-talkers this year, each with a different size and purpose. Each of them features our bright-orange color-scheme, making products immediately identifiable on store shelves, on farm stands, or at farmers markets. We also have TLD branded signage for use on coolers, freezers, and for hanging above products.



These samples are from our TLD partner, Tom's Food Markets in Traverse City. We customize the labels for each store.

Only products listed in our TLD database may be represented with these shelf-talkers. The shelf-talkers come with a set of clear stickers that tell consumers if the product was "grown here", "made here", or "grown and made here."

# Taste the Local Difference® In The Community

TLD purchases thousands of dollars in advertising each year from community-based print and digital media companies. We also provide our partners with large signs to help tell consumers they're affiliated with the brand.



TLD actively promotes its brand, local food growers/producers, and retail partners through advertising, event marketing, and journalistic story-telling with local media outlets.



COMMENTARY - Hans Voss

## TOM'S WEST BAY PILOT VITAL TO LOCAL FOOD DISTRIBUTION

**If northwest Michigan households spent just \$10 per week on local food, we would add \$5 million to the local economy annually.**

With all the support for local food around here, who is there still a good chance that when you stand in the grocery aisles in May, you're surrounded by apples from Peru? Or when you grab a chile and apple at the grocery counter in September, it has a sticker that says "Washington"?

The simple answer: almost. Despite the opportunity to compare, we think they will find value in the local products," she said.

"That insight is built on five generations in the grocery business. Chicago's great-great-grandfather started COTCO in Lenawee County. We will behered the most and they distributed it by horse and buggy in the summer, and by sleigh in the winter."

Her great-grandfather opened Deering's Market in Ensign, and her grandfather, Tom Deering, opened Deering's Market in Traverse City in 1964.

Chicago's father, Tom Deering, led the development of the six Tom's Food Markets that exist today and her children, in a computer database.

Much of the food on the shelves was local because back then, grocers gathered what they could from farms and businesses nearby.

This family story is a defining narrative for our region, hard-working families, riding on the history of the land to build the economy, steadily enhancing the character of our community.

It's a history that gives our region real strength and momentum to grow our local food economy in the future. But how do we do it?

Everytime 20 percent of the region's food comes from local farms and food entrepreneurs.

That is primarily the goal of the Access to Markets, businesses, nonprofits, and government officials who make up the Grand Vision's Northwest Michigan Food & Farming Network.

That's real economic power.

• Rather than drain money from our local economy every time we fill up our grocery bags, we'd get three times the economic benefit in this community by buying local.

• If northwest Michigan households spent just \$10 per week on local food, we would add \$5 million to the local economy annually.

• At the state level, if Michigan increased local food consumption by 20 percent, we would create more than 40,000 jobs and \$1.9 billion in annual economic benefit.

Getting our local economy to "20 percent local" means building the infrastructure to meet the demand and ramping up the volume of local products in grocery stores, where people get most of their food.

Indeed, there is much work to be done. Many farmers need to get on the land. Storage and processing facilities must be developed, the distribution network, which is coming along with co-located local companies like Cherry Capital Foods, needs to grow even more.

Each one of these challenges is an opportunity - a job-creating, economic-development opportunity. But it all starts with demand: local people who seek out local products.

That's why this pilot project at Tom's is so important. Other companies are giving a big vote, too. Grocery and dryers, for example, have been terrific leaders in the local food movement for years and they will be participating in this new in-store marketing program in the spring.

To take a big vote to Tom's West Bay this month, fill out a consumer card. Let Deering and the managers know you appreciate their leadership. If you want to see more local products, we think they'll do it.

This could be part of a rippling pattern for local food that brings lasting benefits to our community and makes northwest Michigan thrive for the long haul.

Tom's Tom is the executive director of the Michigan Land Use Institute, a Traverse City-based non-profit advocacy working to protect the environment, strengthen the economy, and build community. He'll be "Taste the Local Difference" program has been advancing the northwest Michigan local food movement for nearly a decade.

# NEW FOR 2015: Taste the Local Difference® Supporter Stickers

## Taste the Local Difference® Supporter Window Clings

These small window clings are designed to tell your customers that you support the TLD brand and the local products we represent. They are 2.5" wide and 4" tall, with a clear background. Big enough to see, but small enough not to get in the way.



4"

2.5"

## Taste the Local Difference® Bumper Sticker

This is our standard bumper sticker. It features our mileage marker that we use on most of our shelf-talker products to show consumers how far away from where they're standing a product was grown or made. They are made available to the general public through our online store and TLD partners.



3.75"

7.5"

**NEW FOR 2015:**  
**Taste the Local Difference® Retail Floor “walk-over” Decals**



TLD retail partner stores can use these huge full-color “walk-over” decals specially designed for the harsh environment of retail stores. They apply cleanly, are durable, specified to withstand floor cleaning machines, and peel off with now adhesive residue. They are designed to be placed on the floor near entries or mid-aisle.

**Taste the Local Difference® Retail  
Floor Product Locators**

We also offer these bright orange hand decals that are designed to be placed on the floor in locations around the store where local food is seen. They are 8” wide and 10” tall, and made of the same durable material as the larger decal above. These help consumers find local food on store shelves.



## NEW FOR 2015:

# Updated Taste the Local Difference® Searchable Online Database



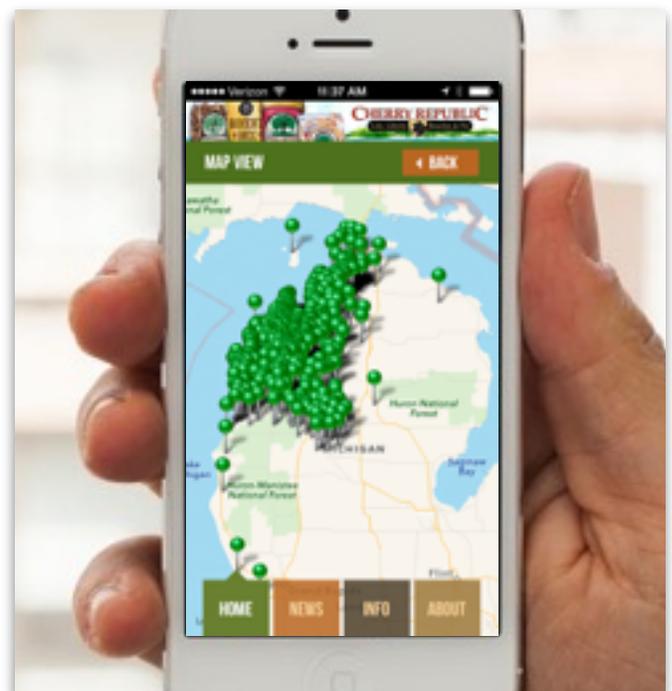
The TLD website has been completely transformed for 2015.

New elements include:

- A separate domain name, [www.localdifference.org](http://www.localdifference.org)
- A complete website designed to serve the needs of farmers, producers, retailers, and consumers.
- More photos.
- Linked to our new database.
- A storefront allowing TLD to collect income directly from its products and services.
- Integration of our new category icons and other branding.
- Social media integration.
- More..

## Taste the Local Difference® Smartphone App for iOS and Android Devices

Our TLD smartphone app for iOS and Android devices replicates our TLD online database in a handheld format. Providing the same search functions as the website, with the addition of providing turn-by-turn driving directions to TLD partner farms and businesses.



NEW FOR 2015:

TLD Retail Store Local Food Cart Topper

TLD Brand at Festivals and Events



TLD Guide to Local Food (48 Pages) Distribution of 35,000



## TLD Supports Local Food Events

TLD puts our brand in front of tens of thousands of people every year. We attend and sponsor events to help represent interests of the local food community.



## TLD Partners With Food Distributors

We know that most consumers purchase their food in retail stores and that in-turn these stores use food distribution companies to source the products they sell. We partner with wholesale distributors to act as a collective brand for regional food producers. Here's an example of a TLD branded food



**NEW FOR 2015:**  
**Taste the Local Difference® "TOAST" Bottle Hang-Tags**



Any listing qualifies beverage producers to have their products tagged in TLD partner retail stores and to have their products featured in "Toast the Local Difference" events.



# NEW FOR 2015: New TLD Glossy Brochure Fold-over

**GOOD FOOD MILES BETTER**

**Taste the LOCAL difference michigan**

Taste the Local Difference® is a local food marketing agency. Every bit of work we do has one underlying mission—to sell more local food in your community. We provide the farms and producers that make all of the good food we eat. And we educate the restaurants, retailers, event organizers and many others that are making sourcing local a priority.

[localdifference.org](http://localdifference.org)

## BUILDING & STRENGTHENING CONNECTIONS

THROUGHOUT EVERY ASPECT OF THE FOOD SYSTEM

**FARMS**  
"We have partnered with TLD because local food and local support are made for each other. By utilizing local food sources in the north, we are helping to complete the cycle."  
—Carla Schmitt, Carla's Compound

**SPECIALTY PRODUCERS**  
"Taste the Local Difference helps to get our farm name out to a wider audience bringing us new customers, new accounts, and generally a stronger local food economy."  
—Mr. Tobias, Lovers Lane

**DISTRIBUTORS**  
"We say that our values, and the food we put with them, are deeply expressive and passionately shared. Taste the Local Difference is an essential element of our marketing communication."  
—The Cox, Black Star Farms

**RESTAURANTS**  
"The farms, retailers, breweries, artisans, artists and local producers are an integral part of our region's unique identity. We at Fresh Food Markets fully support the mission."  
—Christy Saliba, President, Taste the Local Markets

**BLACK STAR FARMS**

**localdifference.org**

1. **CELEBRATING LOCAL FOOD**  
Taste the Local Difference® is an advocate for local food and farming throughout various events. The mission is to promote local food and farming through various events with support, education, and networking. Local food is a growing industry and we are committed to supporting our local food producers through our marketing, advertising and support. We provide the farms and producers that make all of the good food we eat. And we educate the restaurants, retailers, event organizers and many others that are making sourcing local a priority.

2. **BRANDING LOCAL FOOD**  
From bright, colorful signs to eye-catching banners, we help you stand out from the crowd. Taste the Local Difference® has a growing library of creative marketing materials that can be used in a variety of ways. We help you create your own brand and make it stand out from the crowd.

3. **TELLING YOUR STORY**  
All of these fun and delicious recipes, including healthy, delicious, and easy-to-make. Pictures have the ability to tell their own story and we help you tell theirs.

4. **MAKING INFORMATION ACCESSIBLE**  
We have created a mobile app that is easy to use and accessible to everyone. The app is available on both the iPhone and the Android. The app is available on both the iPhone and the Android. The app is available on both the iPhone and the Android.

## DEFINING THE IMPORTANCE OF LOCAL FOOD IS MORE THAN JUST ASSIGNING A ZIP CODE.

It's about the trust gained by knowing the people involved in growing and producing our food. We should be able to see transparently the origins of our food and where it was grown. Transparency allows us to understand the true value of the product we're about to buy. It helps us connect the dots from the farm to the table by drawing a clear and vibrant line.

Taste the Local Difference® continues to build & maintain strong relationships that encourage this trust and transparency. All of the farms, producers and businesses represented by the TLD brand have signed our pledge to consumers. Creating a commitment to the local food economy and supporting farmers, directly answers to any consumer questions we may have. It's one way of building a clear and connected food system, that encourages informed purchasing and creates loyalty—where people believe in the accuracy they see and take notice of the beneficial ripple effect it creates.

[localdifference.org](http://localdifference.org)

**Taste the LOCAL difference michigan**

[localdifference.org](http://localdifference.org)

# NEW FOR 2015: TLD Local Food Companion Blog and Newsletter

## THE LOCAL FOOD COMPANION

*Taste the Local Difference*

**HOME FIND LOCAL FOOD RECIPES STORIES GET INVOLVED LEARN MORE**



### LOCAL FOOD—RELATIONSHIPS REQUIRED

*Bill Palladino, Get Involved*

Timothy Young, founder and chef of Food for Thought in Honor, has the same responsibilities and worries as most business leaders. But when it comes to managing relationships in his organic and wild-harvested specialty food company, Young has strong feelings about the food distribution system he relies on.



*Brenin Wertz-Roth,  
Birch Point Farm*

"In most industries, buying and selling is an anonymous task, done through email or with middle representatives that present barriers to human interactions. I can't imagine not doing business across the dining room table with farmers that I work with," Young said.

With the fast growth of northern Michigan's food industry over the past decade, you might think this is a new trend. Tim Young suggests otherwise.