

**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, 2014-September 30, 2016
<b>Authorized Representative Name:</b>	Ronda R. Goldman
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<b>Recipient Organization Name:</b>	Goldman Enterprises, Inc.
<b>Project Title as Stated on Grant Agreement:</b>	A Taste of Southern Maryland
<b>Grant Agreement Number:</b> <i>(e.g. 14-FMPPX-XX-XXXX)</i>	14-FMPPX-MD-0081
<b>Year Grant was Awarded:</b>	2014
<b>Project City/State:</b>	Waldorf, Maryland
<b>Total Awarded Budget:</b>	99,242

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.**

Goldman Enterprises, Inc. launched A Taste of Southern Maryland in 2015 with three goals: 1) to ensure that Southern Maryland residents have seamless access to locally produced foods and artisan products through direct home delivery service, 2) to become a marketing platform for local food purveyors thereby driving attention and foot traffic to brick and mortar locations, and 3) to connect residents with local farms through community events. TSM was designed and engineered to be a driving force for economic development in agricultural communities by showcasing the rich delicacies produced locally and working with schools to help facilitate change in the culinary landscape.

Civilizations are built around access to land and water, which are primary wealth indicators. The basic need for food and water will always be a driving force in any population and access to fresh, nutrient dense offerings is the highest standard of consumption. The Chesapeake Bay watershed is home to one of the richest and most productive estuaries in the United States, the Chesapeake Bay. Juxtaposed to this aquatic gem lay rich soils that have been cultivated into teeming farmland for centuries. So prolific is this symbiotic relationship that the state of Maryland adopted two symbols that represent trillions of dollars produced from their efforts: the waterman and the farmer.

Southern Maryland is a peninsula that embodies elements of modern society and old world charm. Comprised of five counties: Charles, Calvert, St. Mary’s, Prince George’s and Anne Arundel the landscape is filled with hillsides scattered with barns, silos, livestock, and various crops as well as current development that signals the change of season or of an era. The local cuisine boasts of barbecue, stuffed ham, locally handcrafted cheese, and seafood as well as summer’s bounty consisting of the usual: corn, tomatoes, potatoes, string beans, and so much more. Crops are harvested at the peak of freshness and provide dense nutrients that are encapsulated by delectable flavors. Such culinary artistry could not be enjoyed in silence and therefore needed a voice as well as a direct buyer. A Taste of Southern Maryland is that voice and partners with local farmers, artisans, and chefs in order to broadcast the information and build a membership of local buyers whom love locally produced foods.

### **GOALS, PROGRESS MADE, & IMPACT ON THE COMMUNITY**

1. **Goal #1:** To ensure that Southern Maryland residents have seamless access to locally produced food and products.

### **PROGRESS MADE**

A Taste of Southern Maryland created a mobile farmer’s market that focused on farm-to-door delivery of shares. In order to facilitate this, GE established a three-pronged infrastructure: Website, Farmigo, and Facebook.

The website was designed by 970 Designs from Aspen, Colorado and they were listed as one of the top 10 web designers in the world. They constructed the site and logo, which reflects the heritage of the Southern Maryland region. It highlights the four of the five project partners: Serenity Farm, Inc., P.A. Bowen Farmstead, Cookies Cakes, and The Eden Company. It also showcases chefs, local cooks, events, as well as a local cookbook. The website displays the company's explainer video, which provides an entertaining way to capture the attention of consumers and demonstrate how to use the system. The How It Works page gives information about the shares and how to sign up. The website gives access to A Taste of Southern Maryland from anywhere in the world and allows potential members the ability to sign up via electronic devices.

Another tool utilized for seamless access is a software management program entitled, Farmigo. It is designed to make the CSA or Food Hub process manageable. Suggested during the discussion process with 970 Designs, Farmigo was selected due to its ability to streamline the order, packing, and accounting process associated with running a mobile market. Once a potential customer peruses the information, they are funneled through the sign up process by Farmigo and enabled to select their shares, location, and desired method of acquisition. Upon the extraction of the information, the data is organized into a routing list that can be distributed to drivers.

The third tool in the process was utilizing Facebook for marketing, connection, and brand building. All communications were facilitated through Facebook and a link to the website was placed on the page for easy access. Through this method, TSM conducted contests, giveaways, event promotion and entity marketing. This was a great tool for promoting recipes, chefs, and local farms as well as organizing social media efforts between Pinterest, Instagram, and Twitter.

According to *Time* magazine, Americans check their phones 8 billion times per day. Establishing a seamless online experience was the best way to begin to structure a buying process that can be duplicated and scaled beyond the region.

## **IMPACT ON THE COMMUNITY**

A Taste of Southern Maryland has been well received in the community. Many residents were delighted to know that an option for home delivery was available, which made shopping at their local farm easier. The introduction of the CSA was a learning experience for locals and many were introduced to the excellent opportunities available for shopping at their local farm. This option made the choice of joining a CSA easier as the obstacle of travel and busy schedules were mitigated with an ease of access model. Potential Customers were more willing to consider the option as a long term sourcing avenue for groceries as long as pick up and delivery were handled by a third party. Potential customers were also willing to pay the extra delivery fee, though it raised the weekly cost of the share.

Also, having a significant online introduction and sign up process allowed the project to appeal to demographics outside of the suggested purchasing group. A younger demographic was engaged in the process of local food sourcing and acquisition, which allowed for initial introductions and strategic conversations about food consumption and the impact of sourcing locally.

TSM garnered 53 customers over two seasons and processed \$58,000 dollars in revenue.

11, 540 pounds of produce, value added products, and pantry items were delivered to local homes via the Post Office and direct delivery. A total of 1,152 deliveries were made to local members.

2. **Goal #2:** To provide marketing opportunities for local farms and artisans.

Historically, the economic cornerstone of the state of Maryland is agriculture. One of the missions of TSM is to preserve agrarian history and practices through direct marketing of local producers and garnering support through the facilitation of a synergistic relationship between farmers and families. This opportunity increases the awareness in the local community and drives participation in the lifestyle of its oldest form of commerce. Through social media platforms, traditional and direct distribution of marketing materials, and published articles in traditional media, TSM sought to create a platform that catalyzed consumer movement towards local food producers.

Through Facebook, TSM experienced over 117,873 of engaged users and a total reach of over 98,811 users. This interaction was through direct marketing, contests, and general posts strategically placed during peak times. There were over 1.5 million unique users who saw the posts and over 1.1 million users whom were reached organically. Total impressions ranged over 3 million and post were seen in newsfeeds over 2.5 million times.

CSA partners received exposure through the distribution of weekly shares. Their company name and share supplies were listed and distributed 1,152 times. Serenity Farm, Inc. experienced more foot traffic due to CSA cards distributed to members. The CSA card was worth \$5 (included in the cost of the share) of local meat and most members saved the cards and exchanged them for an accumulated amount. This practice was well received and utilized. **It proved to be the main driver of local traffic to local farms.**

Throughout the seasons, TSM has been featured in the following publications and listings:

***Southern Maryland-This is Living*** – “is published by TBB&M Publishing, solely owned by VKM Marketing Matters. The quarterly full color, high-gloss magazine was started in 1998 by Vickie Kite Milburn and Barbara Dove Fink, as a lifestyle publication about the extraordinary people, places and businesses of Calvert, Charles and St. Mary’s Counties.”

***Maryland Independent*** – a Southern Maryland newspaper dedicated to informing the community about significant events, people, occurrences, and business trends. It is an information hub for local residents.

***Weston A. Price Foundation Local Food Directory*** – The Weston A. Price Foundation is a nonprofit, tax-exempt nutrition education foundation.

***Southern Maryland Agricultural Development Commission (Farm to Table Listing)*** – “SMADC is a visionary and guiding force for the new face of food and agriculture in Maryland, helping to steer the existing, natural driving course of agriculture for new and transitioning farmers in MD to be prosperous, viable and sustainable in the new economy. While its primary focus is the five southern Maryland counties of Anne Arundel, Calvert, Charles, Prince George’s and St. Mary’s, many of its initiatives reach statewide. It is nimble, forward thinking and cutting edge. It is an innovative leading force for Maryland.”

## **IMPACT ON THE COMMUNITY**

A Taste of Southern Maryland is being consistently recognized as a source of local food offerings and information. Consistently sought for local food recommendations, TSM highlights local partners and purveyors that consistently supply high quality offerings. This community positioning has led to a request by the town of Indian Head, Maryland to assist with the development of a farmer’s market in 2017. TSM will work with the mayor and the business development staff to launch a market that fosters community and provides rich, nutrient dense produce and value added products to the Indian Head residents, which is one of the priority areas indicated in the original grant application.

3. **Goal #3:** To connect residents with farmers and artisans through media and community events.

TSM supports the Southern Maryland Agricultural Development Commission’s annual Buy Local Challenge Week. The Buy Local Challenge is an initiative that encourages Maryland residents to shop from local farms during the last week of July, which TSM supported by distributing literature in the weekly harvest boxes. The Charles County Board of Commissioners also featured TSM on their cable program, which provided the opportunity to connect with the local community and encourage support of local agriculture.

TSM’s internship program was established as an outreach module. The focus of the experience centered around connecting high school students with farm-to-table opportunities that educated and fostered leadership skills. Celebrity Chefs and Farm to Preschool were implemented by three students, which afforded them the opportunity to manage, build, and implement productive project strategies.

Celebrity Chefs is a culinary art program that partners local farmers and chefs with high schools. Students are given the opportunity to take local food exploration classes and experience the flavors of local foods and cuisines. Utilizing local chefs builds community by showcasing talent from neighboring communities. It is important that students see “celebrities” from their communities so that they understand that they are capable of the same achievements. It is also important to apply this principle to agriculture so that they also see careers in the field as interesting, desirable, and able to meet their social, financial, and occupational needs.

In order to connect with children at the elementary level, USDA’s program Farm to Preschool was adopted as another project for implementation. The focus of connecting preschoolers to their local farmers and providing activities that give them a holistic experience with the local

food movement. Program highlights are “influencing the eating habits of young children while their preferences are forming; creating healthy lifestyles through good nutrition and experiential opportunities such as gardening; improving healthy food access at home and within the community; and ultimately influencing policies to address the childhood obesity epidemic through a local food lens.” High School students governed the organization, implementation, and follow up of the program.

## **IMPACT ON THE COMMUNITY**

A Taste of Southern Maryland chose three interns that spearheaded the implementation of the Farm to Preschool project and Celebrity Chefs. Their goals were to connect a local farmer with a Title 1 school located in Waldorf, MD. The first school, JP Ryan Elementary School, connected with Frank Robinson, an archivist at the Smithsonian and the owner of Serenity Farm, Inc. The three year-old students were introduced to their local farmer through literature, planting activity, and personal introductions. The students and teacher requested a return visit and forwarded pictures of growing plants after several months.

Other events included:

1. Tasting Party at Hawthorne Greene – Partner suppliers provided food that local chef, Rocquelle Devine, prepared and sampled. Approximately 35 residents were in attendance.
  2. National Night Out at Huntington Neighborhood Center – Ronda Goldman provided information and buying opportunities to local residents. Approximately 250 residents were in attendance.
  3. Charles County, MD 4<sup>th</sup> of July Celebration – Information was distributed and buying opportunities provided. Over 4500 local residents were in attendance.
  4. Thanksgiving Cooking Shows at the Blue Crab Stadium – Chef Terrence Murphy, Marty Elderidge, and Rocquelle Devine prepared local cuisine for sampling. Local farms were highlighted and showcased. The project was attended and recognized by county Commissioners, which helped to develop and build a working relationship with the county for future endeavors. 3000 residents were in attendance.
  5. Taste of Christmas – Local food purveyors showcased their foods and 50% sold out and created a new customer base. Over 5000 Charles County residents were in attendance.
  6. EggCelebration at GlenEagles Community Center – Local food producers were introduced to community residents during this Easter event. TSM members organized the opportunity. It was attended by 50 residents
- b. Collectively, the farmers and artisans were directly exposed to over 15,850 local residents through the above events.
- 4. 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, 2014). Include further explanation if necessary.**
- i. Number of direct jobs created: 13
  - ii. Number of jobs retained: 11

- iii. Number of indirect jobs created: 2
- iv. Number of markets expanded: 1
- v. Number of new markets established: 1
- vi. Market sales increased by \$3,998.98 and increased by 27.6%.
- vii. Number of farmers/producers that have benefited from the project: 9
  - a. Percent Increase: Same

**5. 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?**

Yes, our customer base was expanded through the Farm to Preschool project chaired by local interns as well as Celebrity Chefs. The children received exposure to a local farmer and the classroom teacher indicated that she will connect other Title 1 schools to Serenity Farm, Inc.

The town of Indian Head, Maryland has requested the assistance of TSM in the formulation and development of a local farmer's market. This area was indicated on the grant application as a priority area and serves a population that doesn't have immediate access to locally produced foods. The town is in need of retail infrastructure and TSM will work with the leadership team to help establish a food based hub that is a celebration of Indian Head culture, history, and future.

Due to the mobile markets ability to market outside of the region, TSM has served members from Virginia, Washington D.C., and Northern Maryland. Exposure to other parts of the metropolitan area give TSM the opportunity to review other potential locations.

**6. Discuss your community partnerships.**

- i. **Who are your community partners?**
- ii. **How have they contributed to the overall results of the FMPP project?**
- iii. **How will they continue to contribute to your project's future activities, beyond the performance period of this FMPP grant?**

TSM's community partners are the United States Post Office and the Charles County Department of Tourism. Each entity has been instrumental in the facilitation of the project and both are intended to be significant contributors in the future.

The United States Post Office was approached in the development of TSM and asked to manage the delivery of harvest boxes. This approach was adopted for two reasons: 1) as a support of the USPS system and an integration of services by a locally established entity, 2) as a way to leverage existing resources and expand TSM's customer base within the business community.

The project was met with enthusiasm and coordination was facilitated between the central office in Washington, D.C. and the local branch where all packages would originate. The postmaster general coordinate package pick-ups from the local farm and each package was monitored for safe delivery, especially during peak months when the weather was the hottest. TSM was assigned one person to handle the account and swift follow up was employed when customers indicated a delay in receipt of their share. There were few missed deliveries and most parcels were quickly acquired, processed, and delivered in time for customers to receive fresh products. The packages were mailed via priority

mail with the regional designation, which was the least expensive option. All customers receive their harvest share the day after packing.

During the second season, a same day model was adopted, which ensured that customers would receive their harvest boxes on the day that the produce was picked and packed. Customers preferred this model and remarked that the produce was received in perfect condition. This model was handled directly by TSM, but is available through USPS upon two conditions: 1) a specific volume of packages and 2) a specific location; therefore, TSM is employing a model of marketing to single zipcodes with high volume purchases in order to retain USPS' services and employ a same day delivery system.

The Charles County Department of Tourism has been a partner since the genesis of the project. TSM was invited in 2015 to be the local food representative for its fall event, Fall Fest 2015, which is the county's celebration of fall and an opportunity for families to enjoy the season with games, vendors, music, food, and other attractions. TSM supports the event by providing a first class cooking show that highlights local and seasonal cuisine. The food is sourced locally and prepared by local culinary talent. The event has been a success that has drawn favorable attention by the Charles County Commissioners and the Department of Tourism decided to become an official partner with A Taste of Christmas 2018 - a local food event designed to showcase trending local food purveyors during the holiday season. This event is expected to attract 5000 holiday shoppers. As a partner the Department of Tourism assumes all responsibility for marketing and interest generation.

The Smithsonian Institution Associates Program has invited TSM to submit a proposal for a future partnership. This project is currently in development.

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

Contractors were used to generate the website, copy production, marketing, and for cooking shows. The work was an integral part of TSM's development, which relies heavily on a digital platform and social engagement. The use of contractors allowed for a quick launch and logistical ease.

**8. Have you publicized any results yet\***

- i. If yes, how did you publicize the results? Yes, 2015 results were publicized to members at the Thanksgiving Meet and Greet in November. 2016 results have not been published.
- ii. To whom did you publicize the results? TSM Members
- iii. How many stakeholders (i.e. people, entities) did you reach? 22

\*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).

**Have you collected any feedback from your community and additional stakeholders about your work?**

Chef Rocquelle Devine indicated that the produce was rich and flavorful, thus prompting her to become a member. Frank Robinson of Serenity Farm, Inc. indicated that customers are visiting



his location to turn in CSA cards for local meat and indicated that TSM was well run and the most organized CSA experienced thus far. Member, Therian Johnson, indicated that he had to decide between a CSA close to his home or TSM. TSM won due to the fact that shares are shipped and do not require a pick up. This was a strategic implementation that helped eating from local farms practical for busy people. Dinner Share Member, Anna Barba, indicated that she and her children look forward to getting their box because it's like Christmas every week. (During a delivery I met the school bus while the Barba children were unloading and they jumped with excitement when they saw the yellow Tastemobile.) Mrs. Colbert, indicated that her class loved the visit from TSM and Frank Robinson (Serenity Farm, Inc.). They were anxious to know when the next visit will occur.

**9. 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?**
  - b. \$58,000

The project generated \$58,000 in revenue which was circulated back into the project. The funds were used for acquisition, delivery, postage, and office supplies. Project partners generated over \$30,000 in extra revenue as a result of this project.

**10. 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).**
- ii. If goals or outcome measures were not achieved, identify and share the lessons learned to help others expedite problem-solving:**
- 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:**
  - I. Agriculture and locally produced foods are wealth indicators and desired acquisitions, but will be poorly accessed without an organized system of distribution that is as convenient and glamorous as the grocery store. TSM sought to mitigate this occurrence in Southern Maryland by creating a seamless ordering system that can be accessed through smart technology and managed via a farm related software system. Marketing, sales capture, and distribution are all handled with the touch of a fingertip. This approach proved to be a significant pillar in the sustainability and scalability of the project. The model can be duplicated anywhere in the world and adapted to meet the needs of any locality.
  - II. The utilization of prepaid cards was a significant driving force for local farms. It was also the most inexpensive marketing tool employed. Several attempts were

made to influence behavior through contests, Facebook posts, and events; however, the outcome was engagement, brand recognition, and education, which are platform builders that strengthen a business over time. The quickest route to connecting customers with their local farms proved to be the prior purchase of a CSA card that could be redeemed at the brick and mortar location. It is suggested to add an expiration date to the redeemable amount if speed of access is a desired outcome.

- III. The goal of Goldman Enterprises, Inc. is to create a sustainable and scalable local food model that can be duplicated in other agriculturally based economies and locations. The TSM project demonstrated that a bilateral focus will have to be adopted in order to experience both explosive and steady growth. The original focus was to build a direct-to-consumer model; however, we found the growth cycle to be steady, but slower than desired, which is due to the average three-year cycle for new projects. In order to accelerate growth in a manageable way, TSM is exploring the B2B model and expanding its offerings to corporations, institutions, and municipalities.

#### 11. 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.**
- 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?**
  - i. TSM will continue to focus on five areas in order to maintain and grow its marketing strength for local food: **Television, Blogs, Social Media, Website and Events**
  - ii. TSM is seeking to strengthen its relationship with the Charles County Department of Tourism and promote local foods through culinary tourism. Our next project is due to launch in 2018 and will be in formation in 2017. This initiative will drive traffic from Delaware, Maryland, and Virginia to the eclectic culinary landscape of Southern Maryland.
  - iii. The Smithsonian Institution's Associate Program has welcomed a proposal from TSM. This event will showcase Southern Maryland as a culinary educational destination and afford participants the opportunity to explore local cuisine prepared by local chefs. The farms and culinary history will be the highlight of this experience.

- iv. TSM is seeking to support excellence in agriculture and will work with local farmers in the acquisition of GAP certification. One of the obstacles with achieving this goal is initial understanding of the process and navigating the paperwork. TSM is researching providing support through educational workshops and administrative assistance with the completion of applications.
  
- v. Future Research: Ronda R. Goldman, Vice President of Goldman Enterprises, Inc. and the Executive Director of A Taste of Southern Maryland, was accepted as a Ph.D. candidate in the School of Business and Leadership at Regent University. The topic of her dissertation will be ***From Wall Street to Main Street: Jump Starting Local Economies Through the Power of Agriculture and Entrepreneurship***. With this degree she plans to assist local governments and agricultural communities with building a strong financial infrastructure that is based on one of America's leading wealth indicators: Farmland.