



Fiscal Year 2023 Description of Funded Projects

Number of Grants Awarded: 10
Amount of Funds Awarded: \$9,752,858.61

For more information, please visit the grant program's website: www.ams.usda.gov/services/grants/omdg.

NOTE: The below project descriptions were provided by the grant recipients.

California

Recipient: California Certified Organic Farmers, Inc. Santa Cruz, CA
District: CA-19
Project Type: Market Development and Promotion
Award Amount: \$3,000,000.00
Match Amount: \$1,717,941.00
Total Project Amount: \$4,717,941.00

Marketing to Expand Economic Opportunity for Small and Underserved Farmers

California Certified Organic Farmers (CCOF), Inc. has over fifty years of experience working with organic producers and is now the largest member-based organic agriculture organization in California, as well as owning the largest organic certification company in the U.S. The purpose of this grant is to improve and expand market access for small and underserved organic farmers. There are three goals of this grant. First, to address two key obstacles restricting growth in organic sales: the lack of consumer clarity on what organic means and a perceived lack of consumer confidence in the seal. Second, to create market paths for small and underserved organic producers by linking them with buyers actively looking to source their products. Third, to educate farmers on how to talk to consumers and buyers about organic and provide them with the tools to do so. These goals will be achieved by launching a multi-channel marketing campaign, creating a marketing toolkit, marketing trainings for farmers, and updating and disseminating an organic sourcing directory to school and retail buyers. The expected outcomes of this project are that consumers and buyers will gain knowledge about organic products and that small and underserved producers will increase organic production to meet the resulting increased demand through direct-market channels and buyer business transactions.

Colorado

Recipient: Colorado Grain Chain, Denver, CO

District: CO-008

Project Type: Market Development and Promotion

Award Amount: \$269,270.00

Match Amount: \$314,570.00

Total Project Amount: \$583,840.00

Growing & Connecting Colorado's Organic Grain Economy: Enhancing Organic Grain Market Opportunities for Producers, Processors, and Value-Added Product Makers

By working with several high-influence partners in the organic food space, the Colorado Grain Chain will enhance market opportunities for producers, processors, and value-added product makers of organic grain for human consumption. Although grains make up an average of 30-50% of dietary intake, the organic grain market for human consumption is relatively limited, with little emphasis on local sourcing. Since the inception of the Colorado Grain Chain (CGC) in 2019, the non-profit organization's mission has been to grow and connect a community-centered grain economy in the state of Colorado. This work involves connecting our membership base of 50+ Business and Consumer Members to educational and marketing resources, partners, and technical assistance. CGC's membership base ranges from farmers, processors (millers and maltsters), to artisanal makers (bakers, brewers, distillers, chefs), food hubs, and institutions. Through the Organic Market Development Grant (OMDG), we seek to continue offering support to stakeholders in the grain supply chain through the promotion of organic grains in value-added marketplaces in alignment with our Colorado Grown Grains marketing initiative, while building off and expanding our current program models to organic grains. Specifically, the project seeks to support connections through the grain supply chain that a) incentivize the cultivation of diverse organic grains through Microgrants for small businesses/farms, b) enhance distribution of organic grains through increased visibility in value-added market channels, and c) increase market awareness and demand for locally sourced, food-grade, organic grain through event coordination and the continuation of the Colorado Grown Grains co-brand strategy.

Connecticut

Recipient: Connecticut Department of Agriculture, Hartford, CT

District: CT-001

Project Type: Market Development and Promotion

Award Amount: \$263,743.00

Match Amount: \$265,548.00

Total Project Amount: \$529,291.00

Increasing Market Access for Connecticut Organic Producers and Handlers

Consumer awareness about Connecticut's certified organic producers and handlers is largely unknown. The Connecticut Department of Agriculture will use these grant funds to increase market access for certified organic producers, producers transitioning to organic farming, and certified organic handlers in Connecticut by coordinating with Transition to Organic Partnership (TOPP) partners, including the University of Connecticut (UConn) Extension and the Connecticut Northeast Organic Farming Association (CT NOFA). The

goal of this project is to strengthen new and emerging markets, strengthen farm to institution market channels, increase producer and handler knowledge and skills to market their organic products, and foster consumer education to increase demand for organic products. Proposed goals will be accomplished through 1) evaluating the current market for CT Grown organic products in CT to understand consumers perceptions and understanding and to evaluate areas for growth and improved market access, 2) examining opportunities for CT Grown organic product sales specifically for farm-to-institution, 3) implementing new communication strategies to reach consumers in the state to increase awareness and highlight CT Grown organic products and producers which considers the information gained through the market evaluation, and 4) developing and conducting a workshop series for transitioning and certified organic producers and handlers to implement new marketing strategies and capitalize on areas for improvement identified by the results of marketing research.

Maine

Recipient: Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association, Unity, ME

District: ME-002

Project Type: Market Development and Promotion

Award Amount: \$639,449.11

Match Amount: \$640,769.39

Total Project Amount: \$1,280,218.50

Northeast Organic Dairy Market Development: Strengthening Consumer and Institutional Demand for Local Organic Dairy Products

This project aims to strengthen consumer and institutional demand for local organic dairy products produced in the Northeast US (NE). Facing challenges such as contract cancellations and rising production costs, the project seeks to address this crisis by expanding the farm-to-institutional market for organic dairy, increasing the number of retail outlets promoting organic dairy, and implementing targeted consumer marketing efforts to boost demand for products made with NE dairy. The first main activity is to increase grocery retail partners by onboarding food co-ops, independent grocers, and large-chain supermarkets committed to promoting and selling organic dairy from the Northeast. The Northeast Organic Family Farm Partnership (NOFFP) will develop compelling program pitch materials, increase staff support to onboard and retain Retail Partners, and establish a retail peer group to share best practices in promoting organic dairy. The second main goal is to facilitate product innovation for bulk organic dairy. For this goal, NOFFP will collaborate with regional farm-to-institution partners to increase the number of participating colleges, K-12s, and hospitals buying NE organic dairy. Strengthening relationships between buyers, distributors, and processors will enable market developments, including the introduction of bulk formats for organic yogurt, cheese, and fluid milk, in response to institutional buyer demands. The final goal is to develop a marketing campaign through the development of new marketing strategies to engage consumers and educate them about the benefits of NE organic dairy. This includes creating brand awareness and loyalty for local organic dairy brands through Point of Sale (POS) marketing, consumer food demos, social media, and targeted messaging. The project is expected to benefit 286+ organic family farms and 30 value-added organic processors.

Montana

Recipient: Cream of the West, Inc. Harlowton, MT

District: MT-002

Project Type: Market Development and Promotion

Award Amount: \$602,996.50

Match Amount: \$602,967.50

Project Amount: \$1,205,934.00

Expansion of Organic Markets and Complete Organic Conversion for Cream of the West, Inc.

The project purpose is to fully convert Cream of the West to 100% organic as well as the continued organic expansion of sister company Gruff over the next three years. Activities to be performed include working with local organic farming community to establish new connections and outlets for local organic crops, expand access for underserved communities to organic foods, expansion in building a new sales team, attend trade shows, hire additional plant personnel, and increase social media and web presence. Cream of the West will add education by working with school children through local nonprofit organizations and local farmers to bolster organic processing and develop current nutritional whole food classes to an exponentially increasing audience using education and social media. The expected outcomes are to increase current organic sales, create new full-time positions and establish new buyers in the form of brokers, distributors, wholesalers, food service operations and retailers. Cream of the West will bolster current educational endeavors to expand, exponentially increasing audience through both boots on the ground at site events as well as ramped up social media endeavors, podcasts, and video series. The intended beneficiaries are local Montana farmers-processors-partners in the industry, local school children, plant staff, the community of Harlowton, Montana, and organic consumers.

Oregon

Recipient: Oregon Organic Coalition, Lyons, OR

District: OR-005

Project Type: Market Development and Promotion

Award Amount: \$547,600.00

Match Amount: \$547,621.00

Total Project Amount: \$1,095,221.00

Growing Markets for Pacific Northwest Organic Products

The Oregon Organic Coalition will lead a multi-sector project to grow the market for organic products from the Pacific Northwest (PNW). This project represents a major collaboration with partners including the Oregon Department of Agriculture, Organically Grown Company, Hummingbird Wholesale, the Good Food Foundation, Tilth Alliance, the Oregon Farm-to-School & School Garden Network, and others to promote Oregon and Washington-produced organic food and strengthen organic market channels. Its purpose is to drive consumer demand for organic products and expand valuable markets for organic producers, targeting the specialty/craft food and farm-to-school markets. While building organic market position across the entire food sector, it will focus on products with identified opportunities for significant growth, including barley and other grains, fruits and vegetables, hazelnuts, and wine grapes. Key activities will include

assisting organic producers to become market-ready for wholesale sales, supporting their attendance at trade shows, and connecting them to buyers with values-based purchasing goals. Partners will also conduct strategic communications to educate consumers about the organic label and the benefits of organic food, strengthen organic food in the PNW identity and brand image, and build demand for crops and varieties that are regionally adapted, high-performing, and profitable for organic producers. The project will benefit organic producers through improved value chain coordination, promotion, and increased connections to high-value markets. It will also benefit small and mid-scale craft food manufacturing businesses, people served by farm-to-institution programs, and the public, through greater access to organically produced food.

Pennsylvania

Recipient: Pa Flax Project, Pottstown, PA

District: PA-006

Project Type: Market Development and Promotion

Award Amount: \$1,681,187.00

Match Amount: \$727,775.00

Total Project Amount: \$2,408,962.00

Reestablishing the Fiber Flax Industry in Pennsylvania and greater Mid-Atlantic

The PA Flax Project (PAFP) is a woman-owned cooperative business whose mission is to reestablish the fiber flax industry in Pennsylvania by initiating new organic production and processing capacity. Through this project, PAFP will engage with the beginning, middle, and end of the fiber flax supply chain. Growing high-quality fiber flax has a proven history in Pennsylvania, yet there is little to no infrastructure dedicated to the harvest and post-farm processing of fiber flax in the country – often called the ‘missing middle’. As it stands, PAFP sees no way to bring Pennsylvania's fiber flax to market. PAFP will support and educate producers, and work to build out the middle of the supply chain bringing Pennsylvania's organic flax for linen to market through planning and research of a long line fiber flax scutching mill. PAFP envisions this cooperatively owned mill providing an additional income stream to producers after their crop leaves the farm. With the support of partners, PAFP hopes to open the door to this high-value market for Pennsylvania farmers and manufacturers, putting 12,000 acres of organic fiber flax into production. PAFP will leverage its industry connections to establish contracts for domestic and international buyers of fiber flax and co-products produced in its cooperatively owned mill. This project aims to establish the first complete organic fiber flax supply chain in the Eastern U.S.

Texas

Recipient: Yaupon Holly Tea, LLC, Cat Spring, TX

District: TX-010

Project Type: Market Development and Promotion

Award Amount: \$801,330.00

Match Amount: \$267,110.00

Total Project Amount: \$1,068,440.00

Promotion of Organic Yaupon Tea as a Domestic Alternative to Imported Tea Distributed to The Foodservice Industry

This project aims to increase the American consumer awareness of organic yaupon tea as a replacement for imported tea via the food service sector. A Organic Yaupon Marketing Plan will increase opportunities for consumer exposure to organic yaupon tea while also allowing for additional customers, buyers, and parties to participate in the domestic organic yaupon tea industry. Yaupon is a caffeinated plant native to North America and rich in polyphenols and antioxidants similar to imported tea. By using a hybrid of traditional tea preparation methods, organic yaupon tea has an almost indistinguishable flavor profile from imported green and black tea served in both hot and iced tea. Cat Spring Yaupon has created a cohesive marketing and outreach plan to increase the amount of organic yaupon tea served in restaurants, cafes, hotels, and spas. This plan incorporates the opportunity to promote and support additional organic yaupon producers through the American Yaupon Association while also supplying tea companies who would otherwise be selling imported tea to their food service customers. This will also allow restaurants to substitute imported tea on their menus with organic yaupon tea thus giving their customers and guests an opportunity to sample and fall in love with the incredible domestic organic yaupon tea.

Vermont

Recipient: Northeast Organic Farming Association of Vermont, Richmond, VT

District: VT-All

Project Type: Market Development and Promotion

Award Amount: \$1,016,593.00

Match Amount: \$1,019,076.00

Total Project Amount: \$2,035,669.00

The "Vermont Way" Forward: Expanding Market Access and Increasing Demand for Vermont Organic Products

The Northeast Organic Farming Association of Vermont (NOFA-VT), in partnership with Vermont Way Foods (VWF) and Food Connects (FC), proposes to grow, and develop markets for Vermont's organic producers in three ways. First, by expanding access to promising identified markets throughout the Northeast by developing sales channels to large retailers and other wholesale buyers with consumer bases that are validated by market research to value and support the qualities inherent in Vermont organic food. Second, by developing new dairy, maple, and other Vermont organic wholesale products to be branded and marketed under the VWF brand and distributed regionally by FC. And third, by increasing consumer awareness and demand for organic food through targeted marketing and promotions in Vermont and

throughout the Northeast. Key outcomes include new and expanded wholesale markets for Vermont organic producers, including an overall increase in the percentage of organic products sold through the Food Connects food hub, and increased sales of VWF organic products. Additionally, the project will result in increased awareness of and preference for locally produced organic food among regional consumers. Key beneficiaries of the project include up to organic dairy producers, organic dairy processors, additional food hubs (certified organic handlers), and organic maple producers. As VWF scales its production and increases sales capacity, we expect these initial producers to see increased sales to VWF, and ultimately, for VWF to onboard additional producers and processors. The project will leverage support from Migrant Justice to support the coordination of Milk with Dignity certification of VWF dairy products which aim to engender consumer trust in the values-aligned brand.

Washington

Recipient: Mainstem Malt SPC, Walla Walla, WA
District: WA-005
Project Type: Market Development and Promotion
Award Amount: \$930,720.00
Match Amount: \$931,431.00
Total Project Amount: \$1,862,151.00

Driving Landscape-Scale Conservation in The Cascadia Region by Developing New Markets for Organic Malt

Through this project, Mainstem Malt will launch a new certified organic malt line that coordinates an ecologically responsible grain value chain from farmer to buyer. As a unique Certified B Corp malt company sourcing exclusively from Salmon-Safe certified farmers, Mainstem came to market in 2017 to provide regional producers with a premium market for grains being grown with exceptional water quality and habitat conservation practices. Since its founding, the company has made significant purchases of domestically grown Northwest grain all while retaining elevated transparency throughout the grain value-chain and simultaneously developing the market for domestic malt. Mainstem Malt aims to build upon this successful model to develop expanded markets for certified organic grain producers in the Cascadia Region. Together with a diverse set of partners, Mainstem Malt will increase domestic organic supply chain capacity for organic barley. The project will accomplish this by expanding expert staff capacity, building, and maintaining relationships with certified organic growers and processors, establishing new markets for organic malt, and developing and executing a marketing plan that differentiates organic, regionally grown and produced malt to both buyers and end consumers. Mainstem Malt has commitments from certified organic and transitioning-to-organic growers who recognize the value of barley within a feed grain rotation and are seeking high-end markets for their crops as well as long-standing relationships with certified organic craft beverage makers. Paired with a growing demand for organic in the craft beverage sector, Mainstem Malt is eager to build out this important regional market.