

The **Santa Rosa Junior College of Santa Rosa, CA**, received \$65,719 to train the next generation of (student) sustainable farmers by developing marketing plans for 5 new products, developing promotional materials, and creating affordable farmers markets for students and other underserved community populations.

[Final Report FY 10](#)

# 2010 FMPP Final Performance Report

**Date:** *March 14, 2013*

**Recipient Name:** *Santa Rosa Junior College*

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**Title of Project:** *Growing New Farmers – The Santa Rosa Junior College Shone Farm Center for Sustainability*

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**Grant Number:** 12-25-G-1132

**Location:** Santa Rosa, CA

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## **Project Summary**

The project's goal was to use the principles of sustainability – environmentally sound, socially responsible and economically viable practices at the College's 365-acre Shone Farm to develop and demonstrate to students, farmers and consumers successful growing, processing and direct marketing of agriculture products by enhancing product value and sales, increasing revenue and efficiency, and reducing expenses. The project met and in many cases exceeded the goals established. The farm's production capacity was significantly increased both in quantity and quality of vegetables, fruits and other farm products that were produced, processed and marketed. The project helped expand the successful Community Supported agriculture (CSA) program which grew from a 60 members to 80 in year 3 and currently stands to exceed 100 members. The project also helped the successful launch of student-produced Shone farm olive oil, beef jerkey and grass-fed beef. The first Shone farm Estate Reserve Extra-Virgin olive oil produced and marketed by Shone Farm won a "Double Gold" at the 2012 Sonoma County harvest fair. The beef jerkey was a hit with the students and was sold out within months of release. Grass-fed beef from Shone Farm is now being used in dining facilities at Sonoma State and SRJC campuses. Shone Farm featured its produce and products in various farmers markets in the county. Instructors and students established farm stands on two sites on campus as part of their Direct Marketing class. We launched our first free-range chicken facility for producing eggs at the farm. This project helped create and strengthen the "Farm to Table" concept, from student grown crops to student produced meals. Several community events were held. The Shone Farm Fall Harvest Festival started in 2011 drew over 600 people and the second event in fall, 2012 drew more than 1500 members from the community making it the largest event of its type in the history of the college. With the hiring of a full-time Sustainable Agriculture instructor in Fall 2011 (not funded through this grant), our educational program in this area was greatly enhanced with offering of new classes, improved curriculum in organic production practices, direct farm marketing, and CSA. This resulted in higher student enrollment, retention and completion rates. A comprehensive Shone Farm marketing plan was developed. A Shone Farm website ([www.shonefarm.com](http://www.shonefarm.com)) was developed and periodically updated. A Shone Farm promotional video which was started towards the end of the grant period with outside funding was completed and will be used for marketing and promotion of the educational program and Shone Farm products. The approved budget for the duration of the project was \$ 65,719.

**Project Approach** The goals of the project were to create through demonstration and hands-on learning opportunities a successful student-managed farm and an agriculture educational program of national prominence in order to grow a new generation of farmers equipped with the skills and hands-on experience required for success in direct marketing a wide range of agriculture products.

**OBJECTIVE 1:** SRJC'S Shone Farm will develop and implement a business plan for a direct marketing program that increases revenue for Shone Farm and provides for business management, small-scale production and direct marketing educational opportunities for agriculture students.

- Conduct SWOT analysis for Shone Farm capacity, markets and products
- Conduct market analysis and feasibility studies to assess marketplace, specifically in direct-to- consumer marketing channels
- Identify and launch 5 new product lines within current Shone Farm capacities (fruits, vegetables, horticulture, meat, value added food products)
- Develop marketing plans for 5 new value-added products
- Develop packaging, promotion materials for Shone Farm products
- Review and update the Shone Farm web site as a venue for promoting Shone Farm products
- Conduct project evaluation interviews, collect and compile data, compile project findings into reporting documents, and make adjustments as necessary to achieve project goals

**OBJECTIVE 2:** SRJC'S Shone Farm will expand capacity to meet marketplace demands for additional revenue streams and additional student direct marketing training and educational opportunities.

- Hire Shone Farm crop production manager and a part-time marketing coordinator
- Expand Sustainable Ag crop production plans to a total of 12 acres
- Add 3 new on-farm enterprises to add value to CSA shares
- Develop education materials to promote the value of local agriculture and need for growing new farmers
- Expand existing 60 member CSA to exceed a 100 member CSA.
- Establish 3 revenue-generating direct to consumer on-farm events
- Establish 2 student-run farmers market booths on campus and/or at local farmers markets

**OBJECTIVE 3:** SRJC's Shone Farm will increase curricula, courses, workshops and on-farm demonstrations to meet needs for hands-on training/mentoring in new direct farm marketing opportunities.

- Identify and revise Sustainable Ag program courses to ensure curricula is current
- Identify new direct marketing educational opportunities/courses for students
- Develop 3 new direct marketing courses
- Recruit 150 additional agriculture students for total enrollment of 2,150
- Increase by 5% veteran, Hispanic/Latino and women students in agriculture program
- Develop series of fee-based community education courses in agriculture direct marketing
- Recruit participants and conduct workshops monthly
- Conduct project evaluation interviews, collect and compile data, compile project findings into reporting documents, and make adjustments as necessary to achieve project goals

## **Goals and Outcomes Achieved**

- The farm's production capacity was significantly increased both in quantity and quality of vegetables, fruits and other farm products that were produced, processed and marketed. A total of 12 acres is under organic sustainable farming practices for vegetables, fruits and olive oil production
- Expanded the successful Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) program which grew from a 60 members to 80 in year 3 and will stand to exceed of 100.
- Successful launch of student-produced Shone farm olive oil, beef jerkey and grass-fed beef. The first Shone Farm 2011 Estate Reserve Extra-Virgin olive oil produced and marketed by Shone Farm won a "Double Gold" at the 2012 Sonoma County harvest fair. All the 15 cases that were bottled were sold. The 2012 olive harvest resulted in a total of 90 gallons of olive oil were produced which will translate into 100 cases of 12 x 250 ml bottles, thus increasing the production by six fold.
- The beef jerkey was a hit with the students and was sold out within months of release.
- Grass-fed beef from Shone Farm is being now used in dining facilities at Sonoma State and SRJC campuses.
- Shone Farm featured its produce and products in various farm markets in the county and students established farm stands on two sites on campus as part of their Direct Marketing class.
- The project also helped launch the first free-range chicken facility to produce eggs on the farm.
- The project helped build and strengthen "Farm to Table" concept in sustainable agriculture and food production.
- The Shone Farm Fall Harvest Festival started in 2011 drew over 600 people and the second event in fall, 2012 drew more than 1500 members from the community making it the largest event of its type in the history of the college.
- Sustainable agriculture educational program at SRJC was strengthened with the hiring of a full-time instructor in Fall 2011 which greatly enhanced the offering of new classes, improved curriculum in organic production practices, direct farm marketing, and CSA classes.
- The strengthening of the sustainable agriculture program resulted in higher student enrollment in 2012 (2030 vs, 1900 in 2010), better retention and completion rates.
- A comprehensive Shone Farm marketing plan was developed. A Shone Farm website ([www.shonefarm.com](http://www.shonefarm.com)) was developed and periodically updated.

- A Shone Farm promotional video which was started towards the end of the grant period with outside funding was completed and will be used for marketing and promotion of the educational program and Shone Farm products.

### **Beneficiaries.**

Over 1000 community members benefited from the programs through the annual fall festival events.

At the two local farmer's markets and the two farm stands on campus, our students sold Shone-Farm fresh produce and products. Approximately 200 customers purchased or consumed our products every week.

Over 2300 students registered in agriculture and natural resource program at SRJC Fall FTES (Full-time equivalent students) count exceeded 1200 for Shone Farm – an increase of 10% over the previous year.

25 high school students went through our 2012 Summer Academy in Sustainable Agriculture.

Four products were launched – olive oil, beef jerkey, grass-fed beef, and egg. In 2012, five versions of olive oil were made – olio nuovo, extra-virgin olive oil from three varieties – arbequina, arbosona, and koroneiki and a miller's blend.

### **Lessons Learned.**

*This was a great learning experience. As is typical in agriculture there are a lot of uncertainties. Know the market before you produce is a critical lesson we learned. It is important to sell the crop before it is even planted. Planning for the demand is critical. We did not expect the olive oil to be so successful especially after winning the Double Gold in the inaugural launch. The limited quantity sold out rapidly and we were without product for almost six months. This year we will have enough olive oil to meet demand through out the year. The CSA needs to be flexible. Some customers preferred a smaller basket and preferred options to subscribe for shorter periods. We changed the membership from a longer 16-week period to shorter modules to meet customer preferences. Growth is always exciting but there are always "growing pains" when it occurs at a pace greater than you expected. It is important to have contingency plans to meet the sudden spurt in unexpected demand so as not to lose the customer base.*

### **Additional Information:**

List of websites, press releases and news letters related to the project.

[www.shonefarm.com](http://www.shonefarm.com)

[http://www.santarosa.edu/about\\_srjc/public-relations/news-releases/pdfs/2012%20Fall/6400-SRJC-invites-public-to-shone-farm-fall-festival.pdf](http://www.santarosa.edu/about_srjc/public-relations/news-releases/pdfs/2012%20Fall/6400-SRJC-invites-public-to-shone-farm-fall-festival.pdf)

<http://www.northbaybusinessjournal.com/55468/new-agriculture-dean-wants-entrepreneurial-spirit-for-srjcs-shone-farm/>

<http://inside-sonoma.com/santa-rosa-junior-college/>

<http://santarosa.towns.pressdemocrat.com/2012/04/news/srjc-program-helps-new-farmers-grow-in-business/>

## CSA Newsletters

2011

12/15/11

<http://archive.constantcontact.com/fs077/1103365797530/archive/1108962626924.html>

12/8/11

<http://archive.constantcontact.com/fs077/1103365797530/archive/1108935825805.html>

12/1/11

<http://archive.constantcontact.com/fs077/1103365797530/archive/1108885688162.html>

11/17/11

<http://archive.constantcontact.com/fs077/1103365797530/archive/1108635535979.html>

11/10/11

<http://archive.constantcontact.com/fs077/1103365797530/archive/1108570041880.html>

11/3/11

<http://archive.constantcontact.com/fs077/1103365797530/archive/1108457714924.html>

10/27/11

<http://archive.constantcontact.com/fs077/1103365797530/archive/1108232244202.html>

10/20/11

<http://archive.constantcontact.com/fs077/1103365797530/archive/1108196787604.html>

10/13/11

<http://archive.constantcontact.com/fs077/1103365797530/archive/1108082401397.html>

10/6/11

<http://archive.constantcontact.com/fs077/1103365797530/archive/1107994912879.html>

9/29/11

<http://archive.constantcontact.com/fs077/1103365797530/archive/1107860624336.html>

9/22/11

<http://archive.constantcontact.com/fs077/1103365797530/archive/1107736322412.html>

9/15/11

<http://archive.constantcontact.com/fs077/1103365797530/archive/1107631902064.html>

9/8/11

<http://archive.constantcontact.com/fs077/1103365797530/archive/1107519326593.html>

8/25/11

<http://archive.constantcontact.com/fs077/1103365797530/archive/1107278764993.html>

8/18/11

<http://archive.constantcontact.com/fs077/1103365797530/archive/1107139633997.html>

8/11/11

<http://archive.constantcontact.com/fs077/1103365797530/archive/1107027131095.html>

8/4/11

<http://archive.constantcontact.com/fs077/1103365797530/archive/1106888230999.html>

7/21/11

<http://archive.constantcontact.com/fs077/1103365797530/archive/1106637614123.html>

7/14/11

<http://archive.constantcontact.com/fs077/1103365797530/archive/1106521433431.html>

7/7/11

<http://archive.constantcontact.com/fs077/1103365797530/archive/1106433649722.html>

6/30/11

<http://archive.constantcontact.com/fs077/1103365797530/archive/1106267191049.html>

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<http://archive.constantcontact.com/fs077/1103365797530/archive/1105465269220.html>

5/5/11

<http://archive.constantcontact.com/fs077/1103365797530/archive/1105376923481.html>

2012

6/14/12

<http://archive.constantcontact.com/fs077/1103365797530/archive/1110222319809.html>

6/21/12

<http://archive.constantcontact.com/fs195/1103365797530/archive/1110288842243.html>

6/28/12

<http://archive.constantcontact.com/fs195/1103365797530/archive/1110323409326.html>

7/5/12

<http://archive.constantcontact.com/fs195/1103365797530/archive/1110394701108.html>

7/12/12

<http://archive.constantcontact.com/fs195/1103365797530/archive/1110434392362.html>

7/19/12

<http://archive.constantcontact.com/fs195/1103365797530/archive/1110465423930.html>

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<http://archive.constantcontact.com/fs195/1103365797530/archive/1110549274838.html>

8/2/12

<http://archive.constantcontact.com/fs195/1103365797530/archive/1110612354951.html>

8/9/12

<http://archive.constantcontact.com/fs195/1103365797530/archive/1110680754723.html>

8/16/12

<http://archive.constantcontact.com/fs195/1103365797530/archive/1110719772523.html>

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<http://archive.constantcontact.com/fs195/1103365797530/archive/1110859076608.html>

9/6/12

<http://archive.constantcontact.com/fs195/1103365797530/archive/1110916570320.html>

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<http://archive.constantcontact.com/fs195/1103365797530/archive/1110959818054.html>

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<http://archive.constantcontact.com/fs195/1103365797530/archive/1111031694125.html>

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<http://archive.constantcontact.com/fs195/1103365797530/archive/1111094743779.html>

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<http://archive.constantcontact.com/fs195/1103365797530/archive/1111170348153.html>

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<http://archive.constantcontact.com/fs195/1103365797530/archive/1111285635545.html>

10/25/12

<http://archive.constantcontact.com/fs195/1103365797530/archive/1111358054183.html>

11/1/12

<http://archive.constantcontact.com/fs195/1103365797530/archive/1111422391612.html>

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<http://archive.constantcontact.com/fs195/1103365797530/archive/1111481645971.html>

11/14/12

<http://archive.constantcontact.com/fs195/1103365797530/archive/1111557277308.html>

11/20/12

<http://archive.constantcontact.com/fs195/1103365797530/archive/1111581337008.html>

11/29/12

<http://archive.constantcontact.com/fs195/1103365797530/archive/1111671004398.html>

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<http://archive.constantcontact.com/fs195/1103365797530/archive/1111747113479.html>

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<http://archive.constantcontact.com/fs195/1103365797530/archive/1111801575074.html>

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