

Local Food Promotion Program (LFPP) Final Performance Report

The final performance report summarizes the outcome of your LFPP award objectives. As stated in the LFPP Terms and Conditions, you will not be eligible for future LFPP or Farmers Market 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 LFPP 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 LFPP staff to avoid delays:

LFPP Phone: 202-720-2731; Email: USDALFPPQuestions@ams.usda.gov; Fax: 202-720-0300

Should you need to mail your documents via hard copy, contact LFPP staff to obtain mailing instructions.

Report Date Range: <i>(e.g. September 30, 20XX-September 29, 20XX)</i>	October 1, 2015 – December 31, 2015
Authorized Representative Name:	Katherine Boxer
Authorized Representative Phone:	925-371-0154 ext. 111
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Recipient Organization Name:	Alameda County Resource Conservation District
Project Title as Stated on Grant Agreement:	Characterizing Demand for Local Meat Processing: A Needs Assessment for Livestock Processing Services in San Francisco's East and South Bay
Grant Agreement Number: <i>(e.g. 14-LFPPX-XX-XXXX)</i>	14-LFPPX-CA-0012
Year Grant was Awarded:	2014
Project City/State:	Livermore, CA
Total Awarded Budget:	\$21,261

LFPP 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: Susan Ellsworth; Email: Susan.Ellsworth@ca.nacdnet.net; Phone: (925) 371-0154 ext. 103

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 LFPP 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: Quantify and characterize need for specific livestock processing services within the East and South Bay.
 - a. Progress Made: With support from the LFPP, this project successfully achieved the goal of assessing demand for slaughter and processing services within the grant area through a formal needs assessment process. This report, as well as an executive summary, is currently available on our [website](#) and has been disseminated to stakeholder communities within the region.
 - b. Impact on Community: This assessment was the first of its kind for this region (East and South Bay) of California and prompted a much needed discussion and level of analysis amongst stakeholders about the true complexity of barriers to successful niche meat production. The assessment, as well as the convening of the project Steering Committee, laid the groundwork for additional solutions-oriented processes that stand to more directly address livestock processing limitations and ultimately bolster the production and sale of niche meats within the grant area.
 - ii. Goal/Objective 2: Verify existing processing options for East and South Bay Producers.
 - a. Progress Made: Through an extensive process of consultation with livestock processors within 100 miles of the grant area, project collaborators managed to update prior lists of facilities and generate an interactive map, as well as a detailed list of services available for local producers. Both of these resources are now available on our [website](#) and have been distributed via email and paper copies when appropriate to the stakeholder community.
 - b. Impact on Community: The inability to easily locate an up-to-date and comprehensive list of local processors has led to great frustration within the local ranching community and was part of the impetus for this project. In some cases, perceptions of limited processing services have been mitigated upon the realization of alternative options within a given area that were not previously known. As such, the generation of an updated list and interactive map have helped to provide a much clearer understanding of the geographic distribution of local processing options, as well as to highlight the recent addition of several new facilities. This has helped to reduce frustration, somewhat, while at the same time, further demonstrate the dearth of options within the immediate grant area.
 - iii. Goal/Objective 3: Build understanding amongst niche meat producers and local processors as to respective needs and constraints.
 - a. Progress Made: As noted under Goal 1, one of the most important accomplishments of this project was the deepening of understanding amongst producers, as well as agricultural and resource professionals as to the complexity of barriers to enhanced local and niche meat processing in the region. The assessment, particularly the use of interviews as opposed to surveys, provided a venue for open conversation about the range of challenges faced by producers, not simply limited to slaughter and processing. Additionally,

the establishment of a Steering Committee created yet another venue for fruitful discussion of findings and next steps that helped to advance the overall discussion within this region.

b. Impact on Community: This outcome has helped to temper frustrations and channel energy towards a set of solutions-oriented next steps that stand a greater likelihood of being actualized than simply pursuing establishment of a new facility, which was the first impulse of many producers. By bringing a local processor to the table, I believe we also helped to clarify some of the specific needs of the East and South Bay community of ranchers and perhaps more importantly, lay the groundwork for a strategic partnership in the future.

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, 2014). Include further explanation if necessary.

- i. Number of direct jobs created: 0 – as this was a needs assessment process, it was not anticipated that this would create jobs.
- ii. Number of jobs retained: 5-20 – As described by a representative of a local processing facility, the establishment of a new facility within the current context of limited supply, would likely lead to an adverse outcome for either the new or the existing facility, including the possibility of closure. The assessment process helped to enhance understanding amongst producers about the potential impact of a new facility, thereby helping to avoid inadvertent job loss when sufficient demand for a new facility is not there. This is not to say that any new plant would lead to closure of another plant, but rather that within the grant area, such an additional would need to be carefully considered.
- iii. Number of indirect jobs created: 0
- iv. Number of markets expanded: Niche meats. I believe this process has helped to bolster the niche meat market, particularly on the producer-side, within the grant area. Though not a direct objective of the assessment, through numerous interviews, meetings and conversations with various stakeholders, the reality of market demand within the region has become more evident, thereby encouraging producers to remain engaged.
- v. Number of new markets established: 0
- vi. Market sales increased by \$unknown and increased by unknown%. Again, this was not a direct objective of the grant project, however, it is likely that ongoing discussions have helped to encourage additional producers to consider this sales avenue, as well as to reinforce the interest of existing niche producers who have struggled within this market in recent drought-impacted years.
- vii. Number of farmers/producers that have benefited from the project: 60. While a minimum of 25 producers directly benefited through participation in the assessment, either through the project Steering Committee or interviews or both, a secondary ring of beneficiaries includes those who utilized the assessment or associated materials, including the updated list of processing facilities. It is likely that no less than 50 producers and 10 agricultural or resource professionals directly benefitted from this project.

a. Percent Increase: unknown

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? This project

helped provide additional resources and access to information primarily for members of the ranching community interested in niche meat production. Some of these individuals could be considered limited access, in light of their rural locations, with limited exposure to the demands of San Francisco Bay Area markets. Otherwise, this project did not focus on reaching new populations.

4. Discuss your community partnerships.

- i. Who are your community partners? Throughout the assessment process, the project coordinator worked closely with numerous members of the local ranching community, as well as agricultural and resource professionals from the University of California Cooperative Extension (UCCE) and Resource Conservation Districts (RCDs). A Steering Committee made up of representatives from all of these groups provided ongoing feedback and insight to the project coordinator and firmly grounded the project deliverables in the local context. Additionally, the project coordinator collaborated periodically with subject experts from throughout the region and the state, as well as similar stakeholder driven processes also funded by LFPP, such as that recently concluded on the Central Coast of California.
- ii. How have they contributed to the overall results of the LFPP project? The Steering Committee, in particular, helped to ensure that all steps in the assessment process, from identifying the target audience, to designing the interview questions, to analyzing findings were undertaken in a way that advanced the interests of the stakeholder community. Partners from local RCDs and UCCE assisted with outreach and conducting interviews, while collaboration with the Central Coast assessment process enabled us to coalesce findings in a way that generated a broader picture of demand for slaughter and processing services in the region.
- iii. How will they continue to contribute to your project's future activities, beyond the performance period of this LFPP grant? All the partners involved in this project have a broadened understanding of the local conditions related to niche meat processing and are therefore better prepared to address concerns and questions as they arise, particularly partners from UCCE and RCDs. A significant number of stakeholders and members of the Project Steering Committee have also expressed interest in pursuing some of the "next steps" identified within the report, in particular, further exploration of a cooperative niche meat business model or aggregating brand.

5. Are you using contractors to conduct the work? If so, how did their work contribute to the results of the LFPP project? This project utilized only one sub-contractor from a partner RCD. This individual helped to identify stakeholders to outreach to and conducted several interviews. He also participated on the steering committee and will continue to remain engaged in discussions regarding slaughter and processing in the future.

6. Have you publicized any results yet?* Yes

- i. If yes, how did you publicize the results? Results have been publicized directly to all interviewees, Steering Committee members and local agricultural and resource professionals. The assessment report, as well as an executive summary and supporting materials have been included on the Alameda County RCD's website and have been shared with local email listservs. The report was also shared with collaborators on the Central Coast who continue to work on addressing limitations with meat processing within their region. Specific outreach was targeted at the beginning farmer and rancher

community within the greater Bay Area as well as members of the FarmsReach online agricultural forum for farmers. At this time, publicity has been predominantly electronic, as that has proven the most effective means of reaching a large and strategically targeted audience.

- ii. To whom did you publicize the results? See above. Ranchers, farmers, agricultural and resource professionals as well as consumer-sider representatives of the Steering Committee.
- iii. How many stakeholders (i.e. people, entities) did you reach? It is likely that we reached more than 150 stakeholders from throughout the grant area and adjacent counties.

*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? Feedback was directly requested from members of the Steering Committee as well as members of the Central Coast LFPP funded project prior to finalization of the report. This feedback was requested electronically and a conference call for SC members was convened prior to finalizing the report; this feedback was incorporated in the final draft. Additional feedback was solicited at the time of wider distribution of the final product primarily via email in an effort to build a list of interested parties for pursuing the report's next steps.
- ii. What feedback was relayed (specific comments)? In general, the report was met with significant positive feedback. Many individuals within the grant area have not been privy to ongoing discussions about this issue across the state and as such are not familiar with other existing reports or assessments. During the first round of comments from Steering Committee members, feedback focused on some unintended findings (the fact that there are only a limited number of producers actually finishing meat for slaughter in the area and the fact that many producers don't actually want to expand their local meat businesses for example) and how to feature them in the report. There was significant interest in the impact of cattle prices, drought and other local considerations that play into the overall viability of the niche meat market, beyond slaughter and processing. Additionally, SC members were eager to more deeply explore potential systematic solutions to limited processing options after coming to understand that local demand might not justify a new facility. With regard to feedback from the general public, the majority of responses indicated that the report was a welcome addition to the growing body of information about access to meat processing. Unfortunately, for some already frustrated by long travel distances and occasional long wait times, the report's inability to recommend a new facility came as yet another frustration. This feedback often originated from individuals who may not be familiar with the financial and through-put requirements for facility establishment. Partners within UCCE felt strongly that this report will serve as a critical first building block in a more sophisticated understanding of the challenges and opportunities associated with niche meat markets in the East and South Bay.

8. Budget Summary:

- i. As part of the LFPP 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? No
 - a. If yes, how much was generated and how was it used to further the objectives of the award? N/A

9. 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).

Taking the time to convene a Steering Committee of stakeholders was critical to the success of this project as it created a higher degree of buy-in, particularly from those frustrated by the status quo and allowed both project directors and stakeholders to feel ownership over the results. Inviting a representative of a regional livestock processor to attend a Steering Committee meeting was also of great benefit as it created an informal atmosphere within which stakeholders could ask questions about the basic operations and management of a facility and generated greater degree of understanding and compassion for mutual challenges and frustrations. Additionally, shifting our methodological approach from survey to interview was of great benefit to this project given the limited number of niche producers in the grant area. Utilizing interviews allowed us to gather a significantly greater degree of detail, nuance and thoroughness about needs as well as to create greater buy-in from respondents. Taking the time to connect with other projects within the region focused on local slaughter and processing was also of great benefit as it enabled us to harmonize some of our data gathering. In the future, it would be of benefit to collaborate even more closely when possible and potentially even co-convene a meeting with stakeholders from each region. In the future, it would be good to allow more time to explore and lay the ground work for follow-up on next steps.
- ii. If goals or outcome measures were not achieved, identify and share the lessons learned to help others expedite problem-solving: Essentially, all our goals for this project were met.
- 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: Though a significant amount of research preceded the grant proposal for this project, ultimately, additional publications and conference proceedings came to light over the grant period that provided a deeper level of context for this work. While it is inevitable that project managers will become more familiar with the nuances of the grant topic once the grant is funded, I would emphasize the value of doing sufficient research in advance of a proposal submission. In our case, this was not problematic, however, it is important to ensure that any work being done isn't redundant to, or perceived as redundant to work that has been done in the recent past. This grant addresses a challenging and complex problem that many have been working to address for years. As such, it's also important to recognize that time will need to be spent bringing the local community up to speed, if it isn't already on that existing body of work. That ended up being a very important component of the project.

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. The primary goal of this project was to assess and characterize need for niche meat processing in San Francisco's East and South Bay region. The results of the needs assessment were intended to help inform a plan for addressing those needs. Ultimately, despite perceived shortages in processing infrastructure, the assessment determined that within the current regulatory and economic framework, demand for a new facility is not sufficient. Instead, the assessment pointed to several "next steps" to help bolster the overall niche meat market in the region, thereby growing demand for processing services, as well as some more systematic approaches to help modify the regulatory and economic framework in support of small and medium scale producers. Through other funding sources, namely a USDA Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program Grant, the ACRCDC has committed to ongoing facilitation of a producer group focused on niche meat slaughter and processing. Within this group, it is likely that attention will be focused on the prospects of developing a cooperative or aggregating niche meat business to help address unmet demand for niche meats as well as to grow demand for processing services. One of the first activities of this group is likely to be a tour of several local processing facilities. Meanwhile, the project coordinator will remain engaged in strategic thinking and planning discussions within the region and thereby ensure that relevant information is shared with local stakeholders and the producer group. Additionally, the project coordinator will continue to accept feedback on the assessment and utilize this feedback to help inform facilitation of the producer group. Laying the groundwork for good, enduring jobs is an ultimate goal of this work, both within the local meat market as well as the meat processing sector. Though the outcome of this report did not immediately point to a need for a new facility, this does not mean that the sector isn't poised to expand, creating jobs along the way.
- 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 number of next steps or additional research projects come to mind that might advance project goals, both locally and throughout the state. They are as follows:
- Research what would be involved in re-initiating a State Meat and Poultry Inspection Program (MPI). California disbanded its MPI in 1976 in favor of USDA inspection of all facilities. Understanding the circumstances around the closure of this program and the costs to restart it would be critical considerations in advance of promoting such a plan. If a state MPI were to be re-initiated it might enable additional slaughter/processing facilities to come on line, thereby mitigating some of the distress related to long travel distances to a limited number of USDA facilities.
 - Facilitating discussions amongst local stakeholders regarding the establishment of a collaborative or aggregating business model for niche meat in the East and/or South Bay. This might include further targeted demand studies as well as an examination of case studies, both successful and unsuccessful and facilitation of meetings with interested parties to better develop the business concept. While this process should be driven by stakeholders, enabling support with a venue, resources and possible

neutral facilitation of early meetings might help ensure a more efficient process and successful outcome.

- Coordination of a statewide round-table to convene thought leaders and stakeholders on the subject of meat slaughter and processing. Such a round-table would help to minimize redundancy and enhance coordination between various groups all working to address the same concerns and create the level of intellectual synergy needed to address this challenging issue. Critical to this discussion would be representatives of the meat processing industry as well as regulators and political leaders.