

Oswego Country Market

Develop a more effective mechanism for recruiting farmers to participate in a recently created community farmers market located at the edges of an urban metropolitan area (southwestern Chicago suburbs) that can accommodate a larger number of vendors on its premises.

[Final Report](#)

FARMERS' MARKET PROMOTION PROGRAM (FMPP)

**Oswegoland Park District
313 E. Washington St.
Oswego, IL 60543**

FINAL REPORT

Summary of the Issue or Problem Being Examined

Our goal was to increase the number of vendors of agricultural products, and to expand overall the consumer traffic to our Country Market. Prior to receiving the grant money, we did not have financial resources dedicated to aggressively solicit additional vendors.

Descriptions of How the Issue or Problem was Addressed

In February, we started recruiting vendors from rural areas. We were able to advertise in surrounding counties which are primarily agricultural, including Kankakee, Grundy, Bureau, LaSalle and Will Counties. We also used grant money to advertise the market in our community by purchasing pole banners for the streets, new signage for the market, and advertising in local papers. Grant money was used to offset the cost of labor to accomplish the marketing and communication goals.

Specific contributions of Project Partners

Bob Tripp and Gregg Kaleel, local business owners, provided us with a great location by allowing the market to be located in their parking lot on Main Street in Oswego. The Village of Oswego also supported the market through communication via their newsletter and website.

Results, Conclusions and Lessons Learned

We increased the amount of agricultural vendors from 5 to 12 over last year. Advertising paid off. We purchased signage, an investment with a one time cost, which we will be able to reuse in the future. We learned that vendors book their summers early. Most food vendors did well because they offered quality products, and a group of consumers in Oswego are willing to pay premium prices, if you offer good product. Our

consumer group showed more interest in quality, goodness and freshness than the higher prices.

Current or Future Benefits to be Derived From the Project

We were able to create a viable market where vendors were happy with their sales, and “word of mouth” brought more vendors as the season progressed. Our market ended on September 30 with 80% of the vendors planning to return next summer. We have also received inquiries this month from potential new vendors for 2008. The banners and signs that were purchased will be usable for years to come, so that we may be able to use more of our budget toward print advertising.

Additional Information Available (publications, websites)

A listing of vendors with their contact information was available to shoppers each week so that they could have access to vendor products during the off-season. We also had available a listing of all businesses in downtown Oswego that were open on Sundays to encourage shoppers to patronize local businesses. Brochures and flyers were available each week with park district and community program and event information.

Contact Person for the Project with Telephone Number and E-mail Address

Linda Wilson, Market Coordinator
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lwilson@oswegolandpd.org

Description of the people, organizations, marketing entities and/or communities that have benefited from the project's accomplishments

The community of shoppers, downtown businesses, non-profit organizations and our Oswegoland Park District reaped the benefits of our Country Market. The selection of fresh produce available with options to purchase certified organic or natural foods attracted new as well as repeat shoppers. Visitors to the market had an opportunity to talk with our vendors, ask questions about their products, and to become more knowledgeable about agricultural production methods. For many, the connection between their plate and the earth became more real.

The vendors were able to sell directly to the consumer, avoiding some middleman costs. These vendors had the advantage of pricing their products in a free market environment and were able to put the full selling price into their own coffers. I believe they enjoyed the opportunity to share their experience and expertise with the shopping community.

This year we offered space at the market at no cost to community groups where they could promote an event or fundraiser. The Boy Scouts of America and the Relay for Life for the American Cancer Society took advantage to do community outreach. The Oswegoland Park District and the Village of Oswego took this wonderful opportunity to encourage neighbors and friends to participate in other community events by having a presence there and providing flyers and brochures. Several musicians shared their music with the community on a Sunday morning, and on the last day of the market, the Oswego East High School Marching Band energized the market with their lively music. The participation of these organizations and individuals contributed to the community-wide event that our market has become, and encouraged friends and neighbors to keep coming back each Sunday to see what might be happening in town!

The resources that we were awarded through the FMPP grant allowed us to continue to fulfill our district's vision statement of: "Creating opportunities for a healthy community."

ID# 12-25-G-0504		Oswegoland Park District 2006 FMPP Grant Expenditures as of 10/23/2007	
Vendor	Amount	Description	
1 Temple Display	\$ 500.00	5 brackets to hang banners	
2 Quick Signs	\$ 489.00	pole banners	
3 Kendall County Record	\$ 149.76	advertising	
4 Kendall County Record	\$ 149.76	advertising	
5 Kayla Koller - payroll	\$ 340.00	Country Market attendant	
6 Linda Wilson - payroll	\$ 1,073.68	Country Market coordinator	
Total expenses	\$ 2,702.20		
		Additional promotional expenses	
7 4imprint	\$ 1,169.96	Country Market shopping bags	
8 4imprint	\$ 293.80	Country Market magnets	
Total other	\$ 1,463.76		
(paid for by vendor fees (\$1355.00) & additional OPD outlay (\$108.76)			