

Strengthening New Mexico's Farmers' Markets

To boost the volume of locally grown fruit, vegetable and tree nut crops available for sale at New Mexico's farmers markets through targeted technical assistance; introduction of wireless EBT technology to farmers markets in four rural counties in New Mexico that suffer high rates of poverty, in order to improve access to fresh fruits and vegetables among Hispanic, Native American, and Anglo residents of lower-income communities that receive food stamp benefits; help sustain a new senior farmers market nutrition voucher project that has yielded encouraging results to date; and develop the capacity of new and emerging farmers markets throughout the state by offering competitive mini-grants for facility improvements.

[Final Report](#)

FMPP Final Report

New Mexico Farmers' Marketing Association, March 2008

This progress report will show the status of all FMPP projects. Please consider it a final narrative report. If further information is desired, please contact Denise Miller at the New Mexico Farmers' Marketing Association.

I. EBT PROJECT.

A. Activities/Milestones: Bringing EBT (wireless food stamp program) to a select pilot group of our state's farmers' markets was able to get off the ground with the help of this grant. While the stumbling blocks were significant, we are now well poised to get the program off to a solid and quick start in 2008. While it clearly will take continued training of market managers and resources for things like tokens and supplies, we are confident this pilot has given a good start and that it will be a very important program for our state in the years to come.

Milestones were:

- Decided on type of EBT to put in place (token system, type of machines, 3rd party vendor, etc.)
- Chose five markets for pilot program.
- Created training material, as well as material to be used by markets to implement the program (forms for their boards, vendors, etc.)
- Had consultant conduct day-long training session for all market managers and other key people
- Developed strong partnership with our Human Service Department to work on this project, and they put lease arrangement in place with JP Morgan for the EBT machines.
- Tokens were produced and delivered.
- A system for outreach via direct mail with our Human Service Department was put in place, and the first direct mail pieces created and sent out in the Silver City and Santa Fe areas.
- One market (Silver City) got approved by FNS and started their EBT program during mid 2007 season.
- One market (Clovis) got approved by FNS on the very last day of their market season in 2007, but will therefore be ready to be up and going at start of 2008 market season.
- We helped an additional market (Santa Fe, not in our pilot group) get approved and be start accepting EBT during mid 2007 season.
- Another market (Farmington) has its application ready to send back to FNS for 2008 season.
- We worked out the kinks of what FNS was requiring of our markets to submit for program approval, which should improve process from now on.
- Nutrition education materials were created and will continue to be available via our website.
- Created additional training materials/binders.

- At the end of March, 2008, a second EBT training session in Albuquerque has been (will be) held for market managers of additional markets coming into the pilot in 2008 (Socorro, Belen, Albuquerque Downtown market, Albuquerque Growers' Market, and Nob Hill Market.)

B. Unexpected delays:

- Our progress for getting markets up and running was greatly diminished by the regional office of FNS that we worked with— the Dallas Office. Despite our repeated early attempts to find out what information they needed from markets, they did not decide what they wanted until markets submitted applications. Then applications were returned, and the new requirements were difficult for some markets to produce quickly. Also, by this point it was the middle of the summer, and market managers were extremely busy with market duties and other business that caused delays in next submission. All in all, it was a very frustrating application process that caused the extreme delay of markets getting the program started.
- Contract negotiations between our Human Service Department, JP Morgan and the 3rd party vendor (E-funds) was slow to get settled.
- Two markets had difficulty finding personnel to handle the program.

C. Work still to be performed:

- Get the other 3 planned markets up and running in 2008.
- Add several additional markets to the pilot group.
- Create EBT-specific signage for all of the markets (banners)
- Implement more public relations around programs

D: Current Level of Matching Funds:

- \$3,000 grant from Farm to Table for Silver City market manager stipend.
- \$3,000 grant from Farm to Table for NMFMA contributions
- NMFMA staff time (approx 60 hours @\$25/hr=\$1,500)
- Consultant time donated (assembling workshop materials, 6 hours @\$25=\$150)

2. SENIOR NUTRITION PILOT.

This was a fantastic program for New Mexico farmers and low-income seniors. With the help of a state-funded pilot of \$110,000 that was approved during the 2006-07 New Mexico Legislative session, first-time money was released during July of 2007. This enabled us to get start a pilot in six geographically diverse counties, most of which are quite rural in nature. The fact that we received food dollars from the state meant we were able to use grant funding for nutrition education, promotion, surveys, and other vital activities related to the program. Because we found ourselves with more food dollars than expected, it likewise required a greater amount of resources to fully complement the program. The FMPP funding was extremely helpful in ensuring the success of this important program. In the future, we would like to continue finding grant money to supplement state funds devoted to solely to food so that we can continue to improve the promotion and nutrition education outreach components of the program.

A. Activities/Milestones:

- State funded senior nutrition program approved during 2006/2007 NM state legislative session.
- Set up program fundamentals with state Dept. of Health as administering agency through the Commodity Supplemental Food Program.
- Negotiated MOUs with commodity contractors to administer program benefits
- More than 2,600 low-income seniors served.
- More than \$72,000 received by farmers.
- Lot of public relations in various community newspapers (some samples attached).
- High interest by seniors. 70% redemption rate.
- Surveys created and administered by NMFMA & NM Dept. of Aging & Long Term Services. Much good information received.
- Nutrition education material created and distributed.
- Relationships built with community senior centers and Co-op Extension.

B. Unexpected delays. None

C. Work still to be performed. The work will continue this year with additional program promotion, outreach, and education. Additional food benefit money is being requested from NM state legislature to expand the program. Hoping federal money from new Farm Bill (Senior Nutrition Program) may become available also.

D. Current Level of Matching Funds.

- \$110,00 state funds appropriated by legislature
- NMFMA staff time (520 hours @\$25/hr. = \$13,000)
- Dept. of Aging & Long Term Services staff time (100 hours x 25 = \$2,500)

3. ASSOCIATION GRANTS PROGRAM

This program provided 27 of our farmers markets across the state with access to capacity grant money. First year markets received \$500, second year markets received \$1,000, and other markets had to apply for up to \$2,000 for various projects/needs at their individual markets. All markets had to write marketing plans and submit plans in writing.

A. Activities/Milestones:

- The projects varied from market to market, but some highlights included the use of market bucks as a promotional tool for building customers, purchasing a trailer for storage of market supplies, market manager stipends, a fantastic market newsletter that has become the heart and sole of a market and its community, and many other great projects.
- All markets also had to complete Capacity Grant Evaluations to revisit how they think their projects succeeded. This information will be used to help make decisions for future funding and so managers could evaluate their outcomes.
- Lessons learned were highlighted and discussed among all market managers at our annual market manager conference so that everyone could learn from each other's successes. It was very motivational and provided new ideas to many markets.

- For a more detailed outline of how individual markets used grants, please refer to attached spread sheet entitled, "New Mexico Farmers Market Capacity Building 2007"

B. Unexpected delays: None

C. Work still to be performed:

- All work related to the FMPP grant is complete.
- We are still compiling data from grantees' evaluation forms.
- We will continue this process during 2008, and come spring our board will determine what funds we have available this year and who from the board will be on the grant award committee.
- We will continue to try to find grant funding for this important type of economic development that puts money supports the future capacity building of New Mexico's farmers' markets. Since many markets are in very rural areas, there are limited opportunities for other types of corporate/business sponsorship, but these funds really contribute to the sustainability of many markets.

D. Current Level of Matching Funds:

- Staff time: 60 hours @\$25 =\$1,500
- Board time: 15 hours @\$ 25=\$375
- Market Manager time: 30 managers @ 5 hrs ea. @ \$15/hr =\$2,250

4. Grower Workshop Series

Two communities each planned a series of grower education workshops in order to further educate growers/potential growers about the technical aspects of vegetable production in their local communities with distinct environmental and other challenges. The two communities were in Shiprock, NM (part of the Navajo nation in the northwest corner of NM), and Silver City in the southwestern part of the state. Both communities had great success, and the results are as follows:

A. Activities/Milestones

Silver City

- Conducted 15 workshops which attracted more than 75 people.
- Workshops ran from spring 07 through fall 07. Results of whether some new vendors are brought to market will be known later in 08 when the farmers' market season begins.
- Harvest Festival that attracted hundreds to the the Gila River area was also supported

Shiprock:

- Conducted 5 workshops which attracted more than 60 people.
- Workshops ran from spring 07 through fall 07. Results of whether some new vendors are brought to market will be known later in 08 when the farmers' market season begins.

- They also created several videotapes in the series of "Learning with Elders." Additional video will be produced in 2008 and beyond.

B. Unexpected delays

Silver City: None

Shiprock: Two of the video documentary segments were delayed due to the death of one of the women who was going to be filmed, as well as weather-related crop problems for another product. These will be completed done in 2008 when the crops are ready.

C. Work still to be performed

Silver City: Complete

Shiprock: Complete

