

The **Upper Ocmulgee River RC&D Council, Inc.** of Lawrenceville, GA, received \$37,547 to promote the nutritional benefits of locally grown foods among low-income citizens; purchase EBT machines and provide training to 8 new local farmers markets; and support the continuing operations of 16 existing EBT farmers markets.

[Final Report FY10](#)

# GEORGIA'S NEW EBT FARMERS MARKET PROGRAM 2010



## FINAL REPORT



**12-25-G-1142**

***UPPER OCMULGEE RIVER RESOURCE CONSERVATION &  
DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL, INC.***

# FINAL PERFORMANCE REPORT

August 9, 2012

Recipient Name: Upper Ocmulgee River RC & D Council, Inc.  
Georgia's New Statewide EBT Farmers' Market Implementation  
Program 2010  
Grant Number 12-25-G-1142  
Location (City/State) Lawrenceville, Georgia 30046  
Final Performance Report

## Project Summary

### **Interest and Demand for Fresh and Locally Grown Food Pushed Demand for Wireless EBT Equipment**

The Georgia Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) Farmers Market Program assisted the interest in this project has come from the Department of Human Services as a part of its efforts to reduce healthcare cost that can be traced back to poor diets. Additionally, local food advocates and farmers groups recognized this effort as an opportunity to support and expand the opportunities for small and underserved farmer. The demand for wireless equipment exceeded the supply of 8 units provided for in this project. The additional demand was partly driven by the Wholesome Wave Initiative that incited Farmers Markets to accept EBT. According To Wholesome Wave's research it was discovered that Federal benefit consumers like others; 1) value the quality of produce and 2) were interested in using EBT benefits to support local farmers.

### **Project Approach**

Local farmers market committees that were formed throughout the state to identify communities that fitted the basic criteria of the project's objectives: 1) Availability of a local farmers market that was willing to promote fresh fruits and vegetables to our targeted consumers, being EBT/SNAP recipients. 2) Proximity of market to neighborhoods where targeted consumers would have access. 3) Eight selected markets were to have been provided with EBT terminals and trained on the use of them, along with steps to promote the project in their local communities. Training included orienting managers and vendors/farmers on the mission and stipulations for participating in the project. (Stipulations refer to rules and procedures required by USDA's Food and Nutrition Service to avoid abuse or violations).

According to the plan of work, we successfully placed 8 EBT terminals in markets throughout the state of Georgia. See table below identifying each market.

As a part of the Plan of Work presentations were made to 21 local committees and farmers market groups. Sixteen (16) of the twenty-one (21) accepted the proposal. The goal was to install sixteen (16) and was met.

The five (5) markets that chose not to participate had varying reasons yet notable similarities in arriving at their decisions. (This will be discussed in the section on lessons learned).

## **Update of Placement of EBT Terminals**

There have been a total of 8 units placed in the following locations of the 8 units that were provided for by this grant:

Albany - Albany Downtown Farmers Market

Macon - Mulberry Farmers Market

Warner Robins - International City Farmers Marketmaker

Valdosta - Tie Shoes Farmers' Cooperative

Newton - Flint River Farmers Market

Milledgeville - Milledgeville Farmers Market

Atlanta – Metro Atlanta Urban Farmers Market

Decatur - Decatur Farmers Market

## **Training Accomplishments**

### Market Managers

Training of market managers for successfully launching the EBT project began with the support of the local committees and was continued through technical support from the program manager. Activities included providing a manager's checklist that served as a guide to walk the manager and the committee through all of the steps necessary to launch all of the components of the project from application phase, design and purchase of wooden tokens to outreach.

### Farmers

Farmers were trained on the importance of their participation in the EBT Farmers Market Project at their meetings and at two major field day events sponsored by this project in partnership with stakeholders listed: USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, University of Georgia Cooperative Extension Service, Fort Valley State University, Georgia Department of Agriculture, Ag South, Dillwood Farm, Crystal Organic Farm and others.

### **On-the-farm Training and Demonstrations**

In our work plan we set a goal to train 80 small and beginning farmers through our on-the-farm field days. That goal was accomplished and exceeded. Four events were held with a total of 177 participants: May 12, 2011, Crystal Organic Farm, (49 participants); May 19, 2011, Dillwood Farms, (60 participants); October 20, 2011, Metro-Atlanta Urban Farm (55 participants) and November 1, 2011, Cobb County Training Building (in cooperation with USDA NRCS Field office and Cobb County Cooperative Extension Service, (13 participants).

Each farmer attending these events was trained on how the EBT project operated including the purpose of the project and the mechanics of how a transaction is carried out at an EBT Farmers Market.



*Willie Torrey, EBT Program Manager, speaking to farmers at Southern Belle Farm Field Day*

**Cobb County Urban Small & Beginning Farmer Workshop on 11/1/2011  
Dakota Crider showing farmers creative ways to demonstrate their produce at the market.**



# Save the Date



## Urban Small and Beginning Farmers Informational Workshop And Field Day

**Date** October 20, 2011

**Time** 9:30am-1:30 pm

**Location** Metro Atlanta Urban Farm  
3271 Main Street College Park, GA 30337

### Presenters

- Ag Credit South
- Farm Service Agency (FSA)
- Federation of Southern Cooperatives of Land Assistant Program
- Fort Valley State University
- Local Farmers (Naturally Grown and Organic)
- Natural Resource Conversation Service
- Risk Management
- Rural Development
- UGA Cooperative Extension
- Upper Ocmulgee River RC&D

**Spaces are limited!**

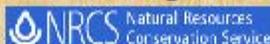
**RSVP Required. Register by October 17th, 2011**

**Please contact Valerie Pickard at**

**(770) 792-0594 ext 100**

**OR email**

**[Valerie.Pickard@ga.usda.gov](mailto:Valerie.Pickard@ga.usda.gov)**



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*Workshop Flier*



*Jake Carter, 5<sup>th</sup> generation farm manager of Southern Belle Farms discusses various crops*



*Aquaponics Truck (Crystal Organic Farm)*



*Children handling baby chicks (Crystal Organic Farm)*



*Registration (Crystal Organic Farm)*



*Free Range Chickens Production (Crystal Organic Farm)*



*Program Manager pictured at Georgia Organics Farmer's Conference, March, 2011 with Michel Nischan, founder of wholesome Wave and Mathew Kulinski, State Marketing Director of Georgia Department of Agriculture*

## Media and Outreach

The success of the project was due to outreach efforts supported by the local and statewide specialized media including Georgia Farm Bureau News, Georgia Neighbors and the Georgia Farmers Market Bulletin.

By: April Reese Sorrow, University of Georgia

4/15/2011 10:58:29 AM

Farmers markets are popping up across the state. And as the summer harvest nears, they'll be offering fresh produce and a chance for patrons to get to know the local farmers who grow their food.

The Riverside Farmers Market in Roswell, Ga., will open for its fourth season on May 14. It draws more than 1,000 people each Saturday morning to shop and listen to live music, said Louise Estabrook, a University of Georgia Cooperative Extension agent in Fulton County and manager of the market.

"It's the place to be, where farmers and consumers meet face to face and everyone is the better for it," she said.

All of the more than 50 vendors at the market only sell Georgia products. The market, which now accepts EBT cards, served 26,000 patrons last year, she said. Besides farmers selling produce, meats, honey, flowers, nursery plants and eggs, there are bakers and salsa vendors as well as others with prepared foods.

"We have 140 farmers markets in the state registered on Georgia Marketmaker," said Kent Wolfe, director of the UGA Center for Agribusiness and Economic Development. "These markets benefit everybody - not just the farmers and consumers, but the local businesses as well."

Marketmaker does not include the 12 state farmers markets found in Atlanta, Augusta, Macon, Savannah, Thomasville, Cairo, Cordele, Glennville, Jesup, Moultrie and Valdosta.

Markets across the state are looking to provide access to all citizens. According to Wolfe, the WIC Farmers Market Nutrition Program is available in 65 markets statewide. The program equated to nearly \$1 million in FMNP funds used to purchase Georgia-grown fruits and vegetables in 2009. A similar program for seniors will serve an estimated 11,000 Georgians this year, supplying \$250,000 in fresh, local foods.

The Athens Farmers Market is already open for the year. The producer-only market offers fresh produce from local growers. Amanda Tedrow, UGA Extension agent in Athens-Clarke County, helps organize the market.

"The market is a great way for the consumers to interact with the farmers directly," Tedrow said. "They learn about products they may not be familiar with, like kohlrabi, and learn new recipes."

Local chefs offer weekly cooking demonstrations featuring foods available at the market. UGA-trained Master Gardeners are on hand to answer questions ranging from composting to canning.

"People are looking for home-grown, local foods," said Ronnie Barrentine, UGA Extension agent in Pulaski County, which is located in middle Georgia. "The problem is not that we don't have the demand. It is having the amount of produce."

Barrentine started a market in downtown Hawkinsville on Saturdays in the summer, a trend that began in 2004. Plans are to open daily soon. Before this market, growers traveled to markets in Cordele or Macon to sell their goods.

When the Henry County Farmers Market opened in 2009 in south metro Atlanta, UGA Extension agent Frank Hancock didn't know what to expect. The first day, 50 people were lined up waiting for the market to start.

"Everybody likes the market," Hancock said. "We are focused on our goal of providing our farmers with a place to sell their goods and local citizens a place to buy fresh produce. Our market is growing."

The market sells produce grown within a 50-mile radius of the county, all freshly picked. Vendors also offer freshly baked breads, homemade jellies, ice cream and salsas. Fresh flowers are available, too. A couple hundred people stop in to purchase goods on Thursday afternoons.

Susan Howington, UGA Extension coordinator in Henry County, also conducts cooking demonstrations and food preservation classes at the Henry County market.

"The local people here in Henry County are benefiting and so are our local farmers because we are keeping it right here in our community," Howington said.

To find a farmers market near you, visit [www.pickyourown.org/GAfarmersmarkets.htm](http://www.pickyourown.org/GAfarmersmarkets.htm) or [www.localharvest.org](http://www.localharvest.org).

**For more information:** [http://georgiafaces.caes.uga.edu/index.cfm?public=viewStory&pk\\_id=4093](http://georgiafaces.caes.uga.edu/index.cfm?public=viewStory&pk_id=4093)

Read more: <http://www.gfb.org/gfbnews/GFBNewsMoreInfo.asp?RecordID=1335#ixzz1TEMDgKn8>

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October 16, 2010

## Farmers market group invites Moultrie to join

John Oxford The Moultrie Observer

MOULTRIE — City of Moultrie representatives been informed of a plan to create a regional cooperative of farmers' markets and were asked to join in on it.

David Milliner, chairman of the SOWEGA Mobile Farmers' Market, said a group in Albany is working to set up a permanent farmer's market in Albany. As a way to help support the market, the group wants to establish a network with area communities to host farmers markets at various times to bring money and jobs to the area.

"This is all about creating food-based businesses and jobs," Milliner said. "This could be something that would create a lot of waves and jobs."

Throughout the meeting, Milliner discussed what would be the image of the farmers markets, what they should expect and the best locations. He said each city that becomes a part of the farmers market group would be spotlighted on a rotating basis to encourage other members to get involved in that city's farmers market.

City of Moultrie Main Street Director Amy Johnson said the farmers' market here started in July and is held in the breezeway downtown. The biggest problem she has faced since starting it has been finding vendors who will come and be a part.

Willie Cooper, a farmer from Sumter County, said large farmers see taking part in a farmers market is a waste of time and money for them. The hope of creating the regional network is to establish a market to take as many orders as possible, creating the need for both large and small farmers to be a part.

"The more farmers we have," Cooper said, "the more people will come out and the more variety we'll have available."

In terms of Moultrie's problem with vendors, Cooper said the group plans to take all towns together to form the network. The problems of vendors here or any other town that is a part will be addressed with members going to the other member's locations.

Milliner said a way to get even more people to come out to the farmers' markets is to host other events with it. He suggested things like arts and crafts vendors and even hosting a concert.

Johnson said she was unsure if hosting other events along with a farmers' market was the best idea for Moultrie. The city already has a large arts and crafts festival in place, Spring Fling, and having those vendors attached to a farmer's market may hurt both.

## **Beneficiaries**

EBT Recipients (Marketing and creative signage, flyers used by markets including newspaper advertising and stories elaborating on the availability of fresh produce to EBT recipients.)

## **Lessons Learned**

Market Managers did not work closely with local committees effectively to maximize results. To have a greater impact over a wider geographical area such as the state of Georgia there is a need for a larger staff to insure a timely and ongoing roll out of an effective outreach and educational campaign. We learned that the field days were excellent events to link market managers and producers.

## **Additional Information**

### Oversight Committee

From the inception of the project an oversight committee was formed to guide the ongoing need to sustain education and outreach. These two efforts are necessary pillars to continue to raise public awareness of the opportunities that have been created through this project and the importance to the well-being of SNAP recipients and all who will benefit from a sustainable farmers market system in our communities.