

The **Indiana Cooperative Development Center** of Indianapolis, IN received \$53,160 to organize and establish an Indiana Direct-to-Consumer Market Association; develop a logo, brochure, and marketing material; conduct a young farmer training program; and organize 3 direct marketing retreats.

[Final Report FY 10](#)

**FINAL PERFORMANCE REPORT
COVER PAGE**

Date: February 7, 2013

Recipient Name: Indiana Cooperative Development Center, Inc.

Title of Project: Building Social Infrastructure to Advance “Direct to Consumer” Marketing Opportunities in Indiana – A statewide initiative to build collaboration among Farmers Markets, agritourism venues, CSAs and other direct marketing systems that serve Indiana Farmers

Grant Number: 12-25-G-1152

Location: Indianapolis, IN

Project Summary

The intended goal of this initiative is to increase the viability and profitability of Indiana direct to consumer marketing systems, and to enhance the collaboration of those involved in these forms of marketing in Indiana.

Project 1: Direct to Consumer Marketing Association

As a result of the boot camps offered in 2009, participants have requested the development of an Indiana “Direct to Consumer Market Association. The association will help promote local food consumption in Indiana by connecting more farmers to consumers through “direct to consumer” markets such as farmers markets, farm stands, CSAs and agri-tourism venues. The Association will promote “direct to consumer markets across the state and achieve visibility to both producers and consumers, aiding in direct to consumer market management and education, and developing long-term, sustainable funding strategies. Another potential role will be to collaborate with governmental agencies on policy to make regulations friendlier and more supportive of “direct to consumer markets”, i.e. farmers markets, agri-tourism venues. This association would serve as a repository of information and resources pertaining to “direct to consumer markets”. The association will play an advocacy role and serve as “the voice” for the direct to consumer market community. The membership will be surveyed annually to ensure continued satisfaction and to make changes to services as needed.

Project 2: Young Farmer Niche Marketing Workshops

Interest in these markets by Indiana Farm Bureau's Young Farmer Committee has been continuing to grow. Each year, Indiana Farm Bureau invites young farmers from across the state to attend a three day conference on issues pertaining to profitability, leadership and growth potential in the agriculture arena. The last two years have drawn crowds of over 500 interested young farmers. The Grain, Livestock and Forage Forum will hold its second annual meeting during January 2011. Farmers from across Indiana will meet and discuss current agriculture issues in their specific commodity areas. A Direct to Consumer Breakout track will be provided to review opportunities in niche businesses and marketing at both of these conferences. In some cases, current farmers are seeking ways to supplement other more traditional farm enterprises and to expand the potential of an existing operation to provide either full or part time employment opportunities for the farmer and/or the spouse. There are also farm families seeking ways to bring other family members, such as children back to the operation. Niche marketing and value-added products could provide this opportunity. Utilizing an existing forum that gathers such a diverse group of Indiana farmers, provides an opportunity to present this valuable information to a larger audience.

A track of niche marketing information sessions geared towards young farmers was presented. This track focused on a) getting into new markets specifically farmers' markets and direct marketing b) seeking out alternative methods of marketing products such as web-based marketing, utilizing existing farmers markets, or co-marketing with other producers in the area c) rules and regulations affecting food based products and d) liability associated with on-farm visitors.

Project Approach

Project 1:

The planning committee (Debbie Trocha (ICDC), Tiffany Obrecht (IN Farm Bureau), Roy Ballard (Purdue Extension), Linda Wood (project coordinator) began meeting in October 2010 to develop a list of possible "steering committee" members that would include market masters, farmers market vendors, agri-tourism venues and CSAs. Our goal was to develop a list that was geographically diverse as well as diverse among the participant groups. We developed a potential list of 50 participants with the hope that we would secure 35 people to serve on the steering committee. Linda Wood, our project coordinator, sent out mailed invitations, e-mail invitations and reminders invitations, and we identified 32 people who were willing to serve on the steering committee. Even those who could not commit to serve on the steering committee were verbally supportive of the effort.

We identified three dates (plus a make-up day for inclement weather) approximately two weeks apart for the steering committee to meet to determine if they wanted to move forward with an association. The first meeting (1/12) was cancelled due to weather. The remaining three steering committee meetings were well attended (1/26: 28; 2/16: 23; 3/2: 28). A formal vote at the end of the third meeting was unanimous for the development of a new umbrella organization for all “direct to consumer markets”.

Project 2:

ICDC and Indiana Farm Bureau collaborated to bring this program to the IFB Young Farmer Conference. ICDC brought the idea for this series of workshops to Tiffany Obrecht, Indiana Farm Bureau. Tiffany Obrecht (IFB) confirmed with the Young Farmer planning committee that we would have a full day of programming allocated for the January, 2012 conference. Tiffany and I met, reviewed and refined the agenda for the program. We developed a series of four sessions to be offered throughout the day and the topic areas were as follows: 1) Getting Into Markets – So you think you’re ready for a niche market? Come and learn from other farmer’s market vendors and on-farm marketers how they made the leap; 2) Rules and Regs for Marketing Food Products – What you need to know to sell produce, meats, dairy and eggs at a farmer’s market or from your own farm; 3) Alternative Marketing Methods –Learn from some successful ventures what kinds of out-of-the-box advertising and attractions get people there; 4) Liability for On-farm Visitors - Ready to invite people to the farm? Lessons in keeping your farm safe from your invited guests!

Goals, Outputs and Outcomes Achieved

Project 1:

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We identified three dates (plus a make-up day for inclement weather) approximately two weeks apart for the steering committee to meet to determine if they wanted to move forward with an association. The first meeting (1/12) was cancelled due to weather. The remaining three steering committee meetings were well attended. A formal vote at the end of the third meeting was unanimous for the development of a new umbrella organization for all “direct to consumer markets”.

Two sub-committees also met during this timeframe – 1) website and 2) organizational structure. The website developer met with the website subcommittee and he agreed to have a mock up of a potential website homepage for the full steering committee to review. The organizational structure sub-

committee met with an Indiana Farm Bureau attorney and worked through a number of legal issues and then made a presentation to the full steering committee as well.

We arranged a conference call with the “Practical Farmers of Iowa” to learn how they formed their association and to determine if there were lessons we could learn from their organizational efforts.

A leadership committee was developed at the end of the third meeting with a goal of continuing to work on the formation of the organization.

The outcome was the establishment of a legal organization – My Local Indiana - that will serve as the umbrella organization for all types of organizations that market directly to the consumer, i.e. farmers markets, CSAs (Consumer Support Agriculture), on-farm stands, bed and breakfasts, agri-tourism venues, wineries, orchards.

The following mission statement was developed for the organization: The mission of the organization shall be to provide an independent organization connecting and advancing Indiana farms to create a vibrant marketplace for local food, farm experiences/attractions and farm products for consumers.

Project 2:

The 2012 Indiana Farm Bureau Young Farmer Leadership Conference was held in Indianapolis, IN, on January 27-28. The four sessions were well received by conference attendees. A total of 235 people participated in the sessions: 1) Getting Into Markets – So you think you’re ready for a niche market? 89 participants; 2) Rules and Regs for Marketing Food Products – What you need to know to sell produce, meats, dairy and eggs at a farmer’s market or from your own farm – 46; 3) Alternative Marketing Methods – 57; 4) Liability for On-farm Visitors - Ready to invite people to the farm? 43.

Participants were given “thumb drives” with information (including presentations as well as resource lists) pertinent to the session topics.

Beneficiaries

Project 1:

Direct to consumer producers of all types are the beneficiaries. The establishment of “My Local Indiana” will give them a voice in advocacy with the legislature, educational opportunities, networking opportunities and the ability to connect with consumers through a central website. As the organization continues to develop, the website will be a central tool in helping connect producers and consumers. The website will: feature members; allow members the opportunity to offer coupons to consumers; feature a calendar of events; offer consumers the opportunity to learn about the producers.

Project 2:

Indiana farmers are the primary beneficiaries, specifically young farmers. As farmers continue to age, suburban development continues to push out and the capital investments required to get into traditional crop farming continue to increase – young farmers are looking for new and unique ways to return to, start, or expand a current farm operation. In Indiana, we have seen two key areas increase in youth farm involvement: an increase in livestock production as younger generations sign on to build and grow livestock for larger companies and there has also been an increase in interest in niche marketing.

Niche marketing in this sense refers to value-added products like grass-fed beef or organic produce, selling from an on farm shop or at a farmers market, and finding new businesses like agri-tourism. These niche markets are used as profit centers when land or other capital investment resources are limited.

Indiana consumers are also the beneficiaries. Farmers are carrying on the farming tradition and keeping the link between farmers and consumers alive. Farmers are educating the consumer about how their food is grown and produced at a time when most people are at least two to three generations away from the farm and have little know of how their food is produced. They are also providing recipes about how to cook the products bought by consumers.

Lessons Learned

Project 1:

While the goals of this project were achieved, we did encounter several problems. The first problem involved miscommunication between an outside contractor and the newly formed organization's leadership team. ICDC chose to step out to the sidelines to allow the leadership team and the consultant to work more closely together. Communication between the leadership team and the consultant was spotty and led to unrealistic expectations on both sides.

As a result, the consultant left the project and a new consultant had to be hired. The website was completed but it took longer than anticipated.

We also underestimated the level of commitment from the leadership team. During the offseason, the leadership team was engaged and met frequently. Once planting and harvesting season arrived, enthusiasm and participation declined which resulted in a longer timeline to accomplish tasks. We learned that we needed to get the project manager more engaged during these times to help complete tasks and keep the leadership team motivated and on task.

Project 2:

The goals of this project were achieved but not on the timeline we originally anticipated. We planned to offer a series of workshops to young farmers during the first year of the grant but due to miscommunication, the workshops in year two. While we had commitments from the Young Farmer Conference planners, we didn't communicate as frequently as we should have and thus fell off their radar screen. In the second year, we stayed on top of communication with the conference planners and the workshop series was offered as planned.

Additional Information

Project 1:

Project partners included Indiana Cooperative Development Center, Purdue University Extension and Indiana Farm Bureau. Each organization was involved in the conceptualization and execution of the project. Each organization also had contact lists from which the original steering committee was drawn. All three organizations remained involved during the entire project.

Project 2:

Project partners included Indiana Cooperative Development Center and Indiana Farm Bureau. For this project, both organizations developed the workshop series, identified and confirmed speakers and ensured that the workshops ran smoothly. Indiana Farm Bureau marketed the workshops as part of their Young Farmer Conference which helped ensure good participation.

Contact Person

Projects 1 and 2: Debbie Trocha, Executive Director, Indiana Cooperative Development Center
317.692.7707

BUYLOCAL

Tree Farms • Farmers Markets
Farm Stands • Restaurants



WHO WE ARE

We are family farmers committed to enhancing the farm experience for both ourselves and the customers that use our products. We seek to educate producers and consumers by providing both the tools to make informed decisions for their families and businesses.

VISITLOCAL

Agritourism Venues • Breweries
Cheese & Food Artisans • Wineries



WHAT WE DO

Promote Indiana farms, agritourism, wineries/breweries, farmers markets, farm stands, and bed & breakfasts. We help consumers looking for locally-sourced products, and provide real-world assistance to member-producers wanting to enhance their bottom line.

STAYLOCAL

Bed & Breakfasts • Local Inns
Campsites



WHY LOCAL?

Hoosier farmers are proud of their farms and communities. By buying direct from the farm, visiting and staying local, you support both the farm AND the local community.

Who knows- you may decide to stay forever!
We did!

MEMBERSHIP FEE STRUCTURES

Organization: 30 members (under), \$100 (above) \$200 Guilds; Wine, Cheese, Artists, Brewers, Farmer's Markets Benefit; Website, Possible Coupons for Events, Boot Camps, Calendar of Events, Listing on My Local Indiana Geographical Map

Complimentary Businesses: Member \$100 Bed & Breakfasts, Restaurants Benefit; Listing on Website, Listing on My Local Indiana Geographical Map

Farms: Member \$100 Tree Farms, Fruit & Produce Growers, Meat & Fiber Benefit; Information about Farmer's Markets, FAQ's, Agri-Tourism, Forum Discussions, Calendar of Events, Website, Listing on My Local Indiana Geographical Map

Membership: By entering into this agreement, your organization becomes a member of My Local Indiana, Inc, a volunteer based, not-for-profit organization. My Local Indiana, Inc, has the right to modify any part of this agreement at anytime.

Term: Membership is granted for a one year period. All information will be kept within the organization and not sold to a third party.

Name/Business _____

Primary Contact _____

Address _____

Phone _____ E-Mail _____

County _____

Organization ___ Complimentary Business ___ Farms ___

Check # _____ Amt. _____ Cash _____ Amt. _____

Credit Card # _____ Amt. _____

Make checks payable to My Local Indiana Inc.

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Farm Stands • Restaurants

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My Local
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Connecting Indiana Farmers
to Each Other and Consumers!



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Indiana Horticultural Congress

Jan. 17-19, 2012

Stop by our booth to learn
more and meet members!

Wyndham Indianapolis West
2544 Executive Drive • Indianapolis, Indiana 46241

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BECOME A MEMBER!

Stop by Our Booth to Find Out How



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