

The **University of Massachusetts**, Amherst, MA, received \$81,439 to professionally develop training videos in English, Hmong, Russian and Spanish on what is required by beginning English and non-English speaking farmers to sell produce at a farmers market.

[Final Report FY10](#)

## **Final Performance Report**

**Date:** 10-30-2012

**Recipient Name:** University of Massachusetts Amherst

**Title of Project:** Develop and produce Farmers Markets training Videos for Beginning Farmers in English, Hmong, Spanish and Russian

**Grant Number:** MA-439-University Massachusetts Amherst

**Location:** Amherst, Lancaster, Springfield, Holyoke, and Worcester, Massachusetts

### **Project Summary**

This project will create training videos to assist new, beginning and limited English speaking farmers to train them in the requirements and to enhance their ability to successfully sell their produce at the farmers markets. The videos will utilize existing farmer training tools that communicate this lesson through alternative teaching resources. Beginning farmers will learn to evaluate farmers' markets opportunities, in Massachusetts as a marketing outlet then train their farmer colleagues. This style of teaching also reinforces the trainer's ability to master the information. English, Russian, Hmong and Spanish native speaking farmers will receive the training and will be the trainers in the videos. They will communicate in their native language capturing culturally sensitive terms and cultural moirés of growing and selling their crops in the US. All farmer trainings will be conducted hands-on. The development and production of training videos will be completed within the 12 month period of the grant. The University of Massachusetts-Amherst's Beginning Farmer Initiative together with the Flats Mentor Farm (FMF) will be the primary project manager, working with our partner nonprofit organizations: Nuestras Raíces (NR), and Lutheran Social Services (LSS) to implement this project:. These organizations work primarily with non-English speaking, socially disadvantaged farmers in Massachusetts.

### **Project Approach**

To develop a farmers markets training video in 4 languages; English, Hmong, Napoli, and Spanish on what is required by Beginning English and non-English speaking farmers to start selling their produce at a farmers' market, and make this video available to organizations working with Beginning Farmers in our state, the region and the nation.

### **Goals and Outcomes**

The University of Massachusetts Amherst organized farmers' focus groups with each of the three partner organizations FMF, NR, LSS, working with non-English speaking immigrant farmers to directly involve the farmers in the development of a farmer' market training video. Each organization identified the farmer trainer the intended audience for the proposed video would be Nepali, Hmong and Spanish speaking beginning farmers who are new to agriculture in the in Massachusetts and US.

Most of the participants in this project came from Agrarian backgrounds. One of the most challenging aspects of running a successful farming operation is not the crop production but skills involved in marketing their crops.

We researched available farmer readiness education tools instructing how to grow for and market at farmers markets and decided to use a video produced by Cornell University called "Shared Wisdom- Selling Your Best at Farmers' Markets" to start the marketing conversation with each of the farmer groups. After each group of farmers watched the video, they each identified their main concern to be addressed by their marketing training video. The Hmong farmers identified customer greeting and the use of crop information, the farmers at Nuestras Raices, crop presentation and customer service, the Napoli farmers at LSS were very concerned about their lack of English speaking skills and wanted to learn all the basic greetings and most common phrases in a farmer's market setting.

A professional film maker was hired at the very beginning of this project. Part of his role was to attend all of the focus group meetings with each of the three language groups in order to get a better understanding of the challenges that might surface during the video production.

A farmer mentor from each group was identified who was also a farmer and part of the group at each organization. This person was to be the trainer in the video. We conducted farm site visits by each of the farmer mentors.

The next step was for each group to develop scripts before any filming could begin which coincided with the requests from the farmers needs from the original focus groups.

During the filming each group utilizes the filming session differently mainly because they wanted the video to meet their needs. For example, FMF had only one trainer so they only filmed one trainer and spent less time filming. Whereas, LSS wanted to film more than one trainer and have more options when editing so they spent more time filming two trainers. Also, with FMF, the trainer memorized the script and was able to talk directly into the camera, the other 2 groups had the Project Coordinator asked the questions and the trainer answered the questions directly to the camera. During the filming process, the farmers spoke in their native language describing how they became a farmer.

Upon completion of all the shooting necessary from all the farms and farmers involved in the project, the videographer met with the farmer trainers to show them a rough draft of the video in order to gather suggestions and opinions to start modeling the training video to customized topic and idea.

In the end, the video does not get as broad as the identified topics as that would be beyond the scope of time for the project. Project leaders also determined a need to start with the creation of an introductory video. Therefore, a set of questions between the other language groups were decided upon and used as a script, leading to each language video being slightly different, but hitting the same topics.

In January of 2012, the finished marketing training video was launched at the Farmer Outreach Appreciation Dinner which was in Hudson MA hosted by the Flats Mentor Farm. It showcased each language and culture to honor all farmers involved in this project. In attendance were most of the farmers involved in all four language videos, the program coordinators, and producers of the film, community members, and other partners.

### **Lessons Learned**

In the months to follow, over 200 copies of the videos were produced as hard copies for distribution and the video was also released online. All of the star/mentor farmers were so excited to see themselves as teachers and stars in a film.

Direct from LSS “It also served as a one wonderful teaching tool at LSS New Lands Farm. It was shown several times to our Bhutanese farmers. The farmers were able to trust the video because it was in their own language and featured fellow farmers. The video was very affective at conveying the major points of marketing your produce at a farmers market. It prepared those farmers who had not yet experienced a farmers market in the United States. They were able to see what it would be like before attending one. Besides actually being at market, the video is the best training tool we have.”

Direct from Nuestras Raices, “from the past years to 2012 season our farmers participation in the markets has increases almost 80% , the farmers are comfortable going to the market, motivated to go next year, sales has increased almost 40% from the previous year. The video is going to be adding to our curriculum for the workshop of the beginner farmers program.”

This video is on the U-Tube and the FMF web site. It’s been distributed by all three organization at their meetings. It’s also been requested by projects in FL, MS, and CA as well as viewed at the 2012 beginning farmer conference.

For More information:

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