

## **Growing Farmers and Professional Development Project**

**Valley Farms LLC** of Foristell, Missouri received \$39,630 to increase access by lower income consumers to locally grown foods for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) recipients through marketing, training, and promoting EBT use at the Foristell Farmers Market.

[Final Report FY09](#)

# Final Report

Date: 02/29/12

Recipient Name: Valley Farms

Title of Project: Farmers Market Project

Grant Number: 12-25-G-0953

Location: Foristell, Missouri

Contact Name/Number: Ed Barrieau 636-463-1205

Final Report

## **Project Summary. The issue, problem, interest.**

Overall the 2010 Market season was a great success.

### Interesting accomplishments:

Upon initiating the Grant Project, the impact of the signs, billboards, and mailers far exceeded expectations. In 2110 market season our traffic increased 5 times over last year's average. We have received lots of feedback about the advertisements

We averaged a total of 11 vendors that have products that qualify for food stamps. We had our first EBT customer on opening day, June 5th. We were able to maintain an average of 11 vendors per market day. Attendance was a record high for the year. All of our vendors were able to sample their foods and cook samples because we were licensed by the St. Charles County health department as a food establishment. Our vendors had great success in the 2010 market season and mostly sold out of their products each week. One vendor in particular, the Mitts family, went from selling 150 Chickens in a season to over 800 this season.

All of the planed projects were completed on time and on budget. This project ended 31 October 2010. We received and spent all funds in accordance with our approved budget.

### Biggest Problems and issues

Maintaining a customer base was simple as long as we had good vendor attendance. The 2010 season was not a problem for us to attract vendors because of the grant spending on advertising and the \$10 vendor incentive fees. The other biggest

problem was lack of local and County governments. Other than allowing us to put temporary signs up longer than 30 day, we received virtually zero support from the City of Foristell. In fact they still charged us \$60 per sign to have a sign up for the summer. We had 3 signs for a total charge of \$180. St, Charles County Government also provided no support and charged us \$250 for a food licenses and several other small fees each year. These topics only became a problem because we were not able to sustain this without a grant the following year.

We did not receive the 2010 FMPP grant and will be significantly impacted for 2011 Market Season. We depended on the advertisement and vendor incentive to get through 2010 Market and are not sure we can sustain 2011 market. We think all the progress our vendors made, to include the Mitts family, will be lost without the grant support. We will re-apply for the 2011 grant and hope to make it through 2011 season.

**Project Approach. Descriptions of how the problem was addressed.**

We did not receive the 2010 FMPP grant and were significantly impacted for 2011 Market Season. We depended on the advertisement and vendor incentive to get through 2010 Market. To help pay for all the fee's mentioned above, we had to start charging vendors and with no grant we were not able to offer the vendor incentive and we were unable to afford to pay for any additional advertising. We tried everything to leverage the signs we had made and other things but we were not able to keep our vendors. Our last market was in July of 2011.

**Goals and Outcomes Achieved. Descriptions of the results, accomplishments, and conclusions.**

All goals and outcomes were considered met or exceeded. The 2010 Foristell Farmers Market was a huge success. Things ran very smooth and the Grant funds were a very big part of this success. The following market year we had to start charging vendors and could not afford much advertising because we had to pay some many local government fees to be compliant. Our conclusion was that this market could not be maintained without some additional funding sources. This is impacted by the fact there are several well established markets in the area and our farm is also located 3 miles from highway where the others are right off the highway. We also think if we could have received a similar grant for 2 additional years, then the market could have been self sustained. We base this on the fact that 2010 was only our second market year and we had tremendous growth from our first year.

**Beneficiaries. Description of the people, organizations, marketing entities and/or communities that have benefited from the project's accomplishments, and a quantitative measure of the current or future benefits to be derived from the project.**

During the 2010 Market season there were 17 Vendors who benefited from the revenue of their sales and some from the vendor incentive. Some of our vendors were first time growers or just picking up a craft hobby. Valley Farms benefited from the exposure of their farm and by the grant salary as well as revenue from sales. The City of Foristell benefited as we are a very small town with few reasons to exit off the highway. About 75% of our customers were from surrounding area and did not visit Foristell prior to our market.

**Lessons Learned. Lessons learned for each project. If outcome measures were not achieved, identify and share the lessons learned to help expedite problem-solving.**

Lessons learned would be to ensure one has funding in place or has a farm right off highway in a well populated area. It is also important to understand the local Government rules and fees. We are about 1/3 of a mile from Warren County where there are almost no governing rules and fees for a farmers market. We are located in St. Charles County and the County and the City of Foristell charged us with annual fees in excess of \$500.

**Additional information. Include specific contributions of project partners and any relevant information available (e.g. publications, web sites, photographs).**

Missouri Farmers Market Association was very helpful.

**Contact person. List the contact person for each project with telephone number and email address**

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