

North Dakota Farmers' Market Growers Association of Bottineau, ND received \$17,394 to design and implement a comprehensive marketing campaign and brand identity for North Dakota agricultural products at farmers markets. This included print and television advertising; a rotating billboard; and staging Field Days to raise the awareness and visibility of farmers markets and local producers.

[Final Report FY10](#)

Final Performance Report



Date: May 7, 2012

Recipient Name: North Dakota Farmers Market & Growers Association, Inc. (NDFMGA)
Title of Project: Expanding Rural Economies through Farmers Markets in North Dakota
Grant Number: 12-25-G-1173
Location: Bottineau, ND
Contact Name/ Telephone Number: Stacy Baldus 701-228-5649

Project Summary:

Increasing the visibility and use of farmers markets was a component in achieving our goal. It is the first step towards a larger vision for the future of local foods and diminishing food deserts in North Dakota. Through the creation of the NDFMGA, a strong network of producers has been created. Farmers markets continue to grow in number and patronage. However, they still struggle to reach larger audiences. The project aimed to increase awareness, visibility and patronage of North Dakota farmers markets through a number of marketing and educational strategies. This cohesive, statewide effort made use of a consistent message and logo to increase the awareness and visibility of all markets throughout the state.

Project Approach:

The project worked to increase the awareness and visibility of farmers markets throughout the state using a variety of different methods:

- A consistent message was crafted. The Association's ***Dakota Grown: It's All Good*** logo and phrase was used as part of a larger branding strategy for North Dakota farmers' markets. This branding effort helps consumers to identify farmers markets as a trusted source for local food. By crafting this statewide brand recognition, individual farmers markets do not have to spend excessive amounts of time and money developing different advertising campaigns for each market. Because some of the markets are quite small and located in rural communities, they often don't have the ability to create their own broad marketing strategies.
- Billboard advertisements were placed in key locations across the state during the market season. The major urban centers were targeted (Bismarck, Fargo, Grand Forks and Minot) as well as secondary regional centers (Jamestown, Dickinson, Williston, Valley City, Devils Lake). Billboards were placed along key roadways that both urban residents and rural residents in the state frequent.
- A television commercial was produced for the NDFMGA to educate consumers regarding farmers markets across the state as well as the benefits of purchasing at their local farmers markets. The commercial aired on cable television. Midcontinent Communications was hired to produce and air the commercial as they handle the largest area of cable channels across the state. The commercial aired during key viewing times throughout the market season.

- The Association chose to target some regional publications that have vast readership across the state. It was determined that the magazine *North Dakota Living* would reach the largest number of potential farmers market customers. An advertisement was run in the June issue. This time was chosen in order to catch consumers just as summer begins and the start of the farmers market season in North Dakota.
- Local print advertisements were run later in the market season. Because the NDFMGA provides grants through another program to individual markets to advertise their markets in the beginning of the season, it was determined that the markets would benefit most from advertisements run in the major daily newspapers later in the season when marketing money has run low or out for many markets. Advertisements ran in papers with a large readership including the Valley City Times, the Minot Daily News, and The Forum of Fargo-Moorhead.
- The NDFMGA helped to sponsor a series of field days run by FARRMS. Field days such as this are well attended both by educators, consumers, and producers. The Association also sponsored the Sustainable-U Training courses run by FARRMS.
- The effort was topped with the ***Dakota Grown: Local Foods Conference***. The conference was held in Fargo, the major urban center in North Dakota, on February 3-4, 2012. An extensive marketing and education campaign was launched to promote the conference and farmers' markets. This included mailings, posters, fliers, television and radio interviews, newspaper advertisements, press releases, social media, and e-mails. The conference was well attended with producers, educators, and consumers from across the state in attendance. The conference was also covered by a variety of North Dakota bloggers and media organizations.

Goals and Outcomes Achieved:

- Billboards were successfully designed and run
- A television commercial was successfully designed and run on local cable promoting farmers markets and the health and economic benefits of eating locally produced fruits and vegetables
- Print advertisements were successfully designed and run in local and regional publications
- A series of fields days was successfully hosted and well attended with the assistance of the organization FARRMS
- The ***Dakota Grown: Local Foods Conference*** was held in Fargo. This event was extremely successful with over 150 people in attendance, the largest local foods conference ever held in the state of North Dakota.
- Anecdotal accounts were given by many vendors and market managers that the advertisements reached a large number of their customers and they saw patronage at their markets increase
- Customer count numbers gathered indicate an increase in the patronage of farmers markets across the state. The Valley City farmers market saw an increase of 44% in attendance from 2010 to 2011. The farmers market located in Drake, ND saw an increase of 40% in attendance from 2010 to 2011 and the LaMoure farmers market saw an increase of 17%. This was despite the fact that the entire state experienced extreme flooding and a very poor spring and early summer for the growing season and farmers markets.

Beneficiaries:

The primary and immediate beneficiaries of this project are the farmers market vendors. The creation of promotional materials for existing farmers markets increased the patronage to the farmers markets, positively impacting the economic gain for the vendor farmers. The communities hosting farmers markets also benefited by increasing the awareness of the availability of fresh fruit and vegetables in areas otherwise characterized as food deserts. The communities experience economic and health benefits as consumers continue to learn about the low cost, high quality food available to them. As growers and farmers markets grow in size, ultimately the NDFMGA will benefit through a growth in membership, support, and need for providing future educational materials and professional development opportunities. Indeed, this is already occurring. Already four new farmers markets have been established and joined the NDFMGA in 2012, one in Grafton, Park River, Kulm, and Fort Totten, located in the Spirit Lake Reservation.

Lessons Learned:

The year of 2011 was a very trying one for the state of North Dakota and the farmers' markets. The entire state experienced flooding with extreme events occurring all along the Missouri River Basin, the Souris River Basin, the Red River Basin, and the Devils Lake region with flooding lasting well into the market season. Many markets started later than normal, many growers experienced partial or total crop failure due to heavy rains, snow melt, and flooding.

Despite this, it quickly became apparent that the statewide advertising effort was well received. The billboards and television commercials were particularly remarked upon as these are media outlets normally out of the financial reach for most farmers markets in the state. Customer counts received showed an increase in patronage, though not quite at the 50% level of increase we had hoped for. However, some markets, such as the one in Valley City came close with an increase of 44% from 2010 to 2011. Several new markets have been established and a number of new vendors have already signed up to join the NDFMGA in 2012. Members of the NDFMGA specifically requested at the annual members meeting that the Association continue such statewide efforts as they had a positive impact on their markets. The NDFMGA Board of Directors has committed to doing so utilizing new funding sources in the future.

Additional Information:

Below are examples of billboards and advertisements utilized in this project. A copy of the television commercial has also been included on a cd.



Ask for the Good Stuff

Find a farmers market near you and look for *Dakota Grown* products in your grocery.

www.ndfarmersmarkets.com

Ask For The Good Stuff



Dakota Grown
IT'S ALL GOOD

The North Dakota Farmers Market and Growers Association, Inc.

ndfarmersmarkets.com

NEWMAN

Client: ND Farmers Market
Rep: Wayne Deery - Jamestown
Date: March 24, 2011 v. tomato good
Designer: Ali Mesroul

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Please note: This artwork is intended to be viewed from 5 to 15 feet away (=100' - 300' actual distance).

30-Sheet Bleed 8-Sheet Junior Vinyl Wrap

Approved by: _____



The North Dakota Farmers Market and Growers Association (NDFMGA) exists to help producers and markets grow and remain strong. So promote ND farmers' markets and...

Join Today!

Dakota Grown: It's All Good.

Call 701-228-5649 Or go to WWW.NDFARMERSMARKETS.COM

Visit Your Local Farmers' Market!

Full of Fun Fall Festivities



North Prairie Farmers Market

Saturdays 11:00 am - 2:00 pm

Located at the parking lot 1 block north of the corner of Broadway and 3rd Ave SW.

Accepts SNAP cards and debit/credit cards.

Be on the look out for Fall Festival information, on Oct. 15th

Find them on Facebook or e-mail veggies@northstarorganic.com for more information

Minot Soccer Park Farmers Market

Runs until Halloween (except on days of bad weather)

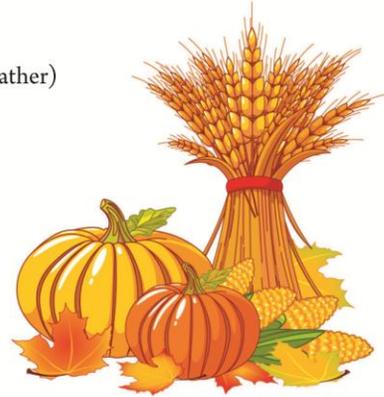
Tuesdays 9:00 am

Thursdays 9:00 am & 4:00 pm

Saturdays 9:00 am

Located on 21st Ave. NW at the Soccer Field

Questions? Call 721-2551 or 721-9565



*Thanks for sticking with us
through the flood!*

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