**Farmers Market Moms**

**Northeast Nebraska Resource Conservation & Development Inc** of Plainview, Nebraska received $86,462 to provide training and marketing assistance to rural families, particularly Native American mothers and their families, in order to become successful farmers market growers and vendors.

Final Report FY09

# Final Performance Report

Cover page:
Date: December 31, 2011
Recipient Name: Northeast Nebraska Resource Conservation & Development
Title of Project: Farmers' Market Moms
Grant Number: 12-25-G-0956
Location (City/State): Plainview, Nebraska

## Project Summary:

- *Outline the issues, problems, interest, and/or need for the project.*

It is widely accepted that locally grown food and fresh, whole foods are best for health and are the best value in purchasing food. Yet, many young mothers or mothers with young children may not have had previous exposure to farmers markets or other fresh food venues. Because they are busy, they need accessible information and encouragement. Primarily, they need to know how to shop at a farmers market, what to look for in fresh produce, how to find the farmer vendors they should be buying from, and the questions to ask of vendors to help them in preparing, preserving and utilizing the food they buy.

Local statistics on Native American populations, living in the region, show that they are some of the most vulnerable mothers and families when it comes to prenatal health care and availability of good nutrition for young children in the family.

## Project Approach:

- *Describe how the issue or problem was addressed*

A total of 14 farmers market workshops were held throughout Nebraska and southeast South Dakota. Information presented at the various workshops included: how to start a garden, how to grow produce, how to harvest, how to preserve the harvest, how to become a market vendor, and how to start and organize a market.

The guidebook, "A Family Guide to Finding and Growing Fresh Food", along with a companion website called "Farmers Market Moms", were developed to provide the opportunity for a "Farmers Market Moms" community to develop. Mothers and their families can read up on or ask fresh food questions, can learn about growing for a market, about cooking and preserving whole foods and how to get their children interested in foods that are better for them.

## Goals and Outcomes Achieved:

- *Describe accomplishments, results and conclusions*

As a result of this project over 240 people attended the 14 workshops held in South Dakota and Nebraska that detailed information on how to plant a garden, how to start a farmer's market, how to set up displays and sell at a market. Over

3,000 of the guidebooks were printed and distributed to various clinics, organizations, workshops and conferences, including tribal clinics and meetings. The guidebooks continue to be handed out.

From the 4 workshops held in South Dakota one new market was developed in Kimball and the Mitchell market gained new vendors. Wagner, SD has started a community garden. The Vermillion market continues to grow and does very well. It is a year round market.

From the 10 workshops held in Nebraska new markets were developed in Clearwater and Albion. A year round indoor market was opened in Norfolk and plans are being made for a market in Davenport. The Santee Sioux Nation tribe will be opening their first market in 2012 as a result of the workshop held in their community. They are also planning community gardens for the tribe and neighboring communities. The communities of Wayne, Neligh and Pierce have added new vendors and shoppers as a result of more exposure through the workshops.

An evaluation survey was sent out to attendees of the workshops and market vendors. There was a 21% response to the evaluation survey. Of those surveyed 58% were involved in a farmers market before attending a Farmers' Market Moms workshop. Of those, 50% were producer/vendors, 25% were managers and 45% were shoppers.

After attending a workshop 76% are now involved with a farmers market. Of those, 64% are producer/vendors, 18% are managers and 43% are shoppers.

Of those surveyed 29% stated they are involved in a new market that was started within the last two years.

Of those that had been involved in a market prior to the workshops 24% stated that their sales increased in 2010 and 28% stated that attendance had increased in 2010.

Of those taking the survey 40% stated that their sales increased in 2011 and 43% stated that the attendance had increased in 2011.

## Beneficiaries:

- *Describe 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.*

A total of 14 workshops on how to start community gardens, how to start a farmers' market, how to become a vendor at a market and best practices for selling at a market were held in South Dakota and Nebraska. Resources were also provided on how to grow and preserve your own food. Workshops were held in four locations in South Dakota: Vermillion, Wagner, Mitchell and Kimball. In

Nebraska a total of 10 workshops were held at the Corps of Discovery Welcome Center near Crofton, in Hartington, Clearwater, Plainview, Albion, Davenport, Norfolk, on the Santee Sioux Reservation and two workshops were held in Wayne.

A total of 240 interested parties attended the workshops.

Of the 14 locations, six of the locations did not have markets and were hoping the workshops would help spur interest. Wagner did not start a market, but they did start making plans for a community garden. Kimball started a market towards the end of this summer and is planning on getting an earlier start next year. Clearwater began their market in 2010 and reliably had 7 to 12 vendors the entire first season. It opened this year with an average of 4 vendors and a steady stream of customers. Some customers came from as far as 35 miles away. Albion began their first market in June of this year and had an average of eight vendors at the market each Saturday with customers lined up waiting to make their purchases. They are anxiously making plans for their 2012 market.

A couple that attended one of the workshops in Wayne in the spring of 2010 opened a year-round indoor market in Norfolk in November of 2010. They just celebrated their one-year anniversary and have a variety of local food products from over 20 vendors. The owners process 2 beef and 4 hogs every two weeks to keep up with meat demands. The vendors provide local lamb, poultry, fish, baked goods, produce in season, jams, jellies, eggs, milk, cheese, coffee, root beer, seasonings, candies, honey and more. They recently installed a certified kitchen and can now offer fresh soups and sandwiches made from local products, plus catering.

The Santee Sioux Nation had planned to open their market this year until the flooding along the Missouri River closed the main road to their community from the west and travelers had to take detours to get to Santee. The road was closed for over three months and sharply cut the number of people normally going to the area. They are currently holding meetings and workshops in preparation for opening their market in 2012. The tribe will be the main beneficiary in this case. They will grow healthy products for their own consumption, plus be able to make an extra income from the produce they sell. They are also making plans of supplying healthy fruits and vegetables into the Santee school system.

Davenport is working on plans for their first market to open in 2012.

We held two workshops in Wayne. The Wayne market was having some issues with vendors and the location of the market. Since the workshops they have added more vendors and are now looking at possibly opening an indoor market in 2012.

Vermillion and Mitchell had active markets prior to the workshops but hoped to gain more vendors and customers. The day of the workshop in Mitchell, two attendees decided to become new vendors for the market. Vermillion is a very successful market that continually draws new vendors and shoppers from the college town. The workshop helped to promote the market and give added training to the existing vendors and shoppers.

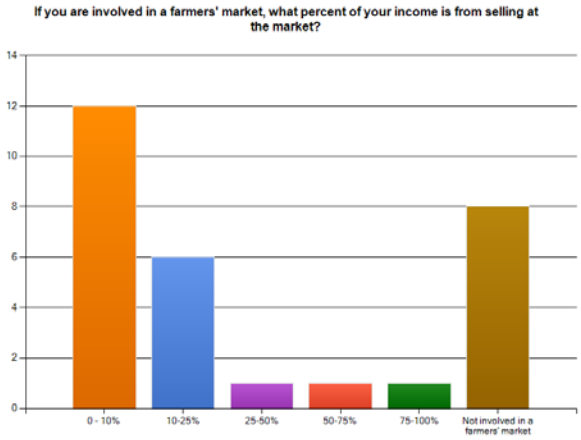
## Lessons Learned:

- *Describe in reasonable detail the lessons that were learned and benefits that were gained from the project. If the project objective was not achieved (or if portions of the objective were not achieved) describe the reasons and what was learned in the process. Identify and share the lessons learned to help expedite problem solving for others who will read your final report.*

Lessons learned: sometimes things just don't go as planned. The project's assistant director took on a full time job shortly into the first year of the project and reduced his time on the project to only a few hours a month. He would have handled the South Dakota portion of the project. The two South Dakota RC&D coordinators stepped forward and were able to assist the director of the project with locating key presenters for the workshops in their areas and helped to pinpoint locations in need of the training in their areas. The workshop in Wagner was held on reservation grounds.

The flooding situation for the Santee Sioux set them back a year on their market plans. With some restructuring of the project and extension of time spent with the Santee Sioux tribe, things turned out well. The tribe is focused on starting a market next year.

It was hard to get vendors and managers to keep a record of income for the project. In fact, it never really happened, but when asked in the survey "What percent of your income is from selling at the market?" the responses were as follows: 41% stated 0-10% income, 19% stated 10-25% income, 3% stated 25-50% income, 7% stated 50-75% income & 3% stated 75-100% income.



## Additional Information:

- *Include and describe the specific contributions of project partners, and include any relevant information that would help in understanding the accomplishments of your project (e.g. publications, web sites, and photographs).*

The two South Dakota RC&D coordinators stepped up and helped with the South Dakota side of the project after the project's assistant director backed off his hours on the project. The Lower James RC&D assisted with planning the Vermillion and Mitchell workshops and the Randall RC&D assisted with getting out guidebooks and planning the Wagner and Kimball workshops.

The website www.farmersmarketmoms.com was developed along with a facebook page and a "Farmers Market Moms" logo.

The guidebook, "A Family Guide to Finding and Growing Fresh Food" was developed with the assistance of a certified dietitian and over 3,000 copies were printed, along with a survey card that was inserted in the publication. The survey card was to be completed and returned to the Northeast Nebraska RC&D and a t-shirt was then sent or given to the person completing the survey.

Following were the questions and responses on the survey card:

| | | **Nebraska** | **S. Dakota** |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1) | Have you purchased food from a farmers' market before? | Yes - 80% | 95% |
| 2) | Do you raise your own food in a garden? | Yes – 84% | 86% |
| 3) | Are you a farmers' market vendor? | No - 76% | 75% |
| 4) | Are you interested in growing food to sell at a farmers' market? | Yes – 57% | 50% |
| 5) | Has this "Family Guide" booklet been helpful? | Yes – 98% | 100% |
| 6) | Would you like to be contacted? | Yes – 52% | 57% |

For those interested in participating in markets information was provided on markets in their locations and, or ways to start a market in their area.

## Contact Person:

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

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