

Farm to Chef: A Value Chain Approach to Expanding Sales to Restaurants in Santa Fe, NM

The **Santa Fe Business Alliance** of Santa Fe, New Mexico received \$98,334 to increase sales of farm products directly to restaurants in Santa Fe, by facilitating relationships between growers and restaurants and consumers. Funds were used to improve buyer access at the farmers market, to develop a system for product aggregation and distribution, and to increase consumer interest in consuming local foods in restaurants in Santa Fe.

[Final Report FY 09](#)

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Recipient Name: **Santa Fe Alliance**

Title of Project: **Farm to Restaurant Project**

Grant Number: **12-25-G-0959**

Location: **Santa Fe, New Mexico**

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Progress Report #4 - FMPP Report – 5/2011--11/2011



Farm to Restaurant *Delivers* is a local food distribution system that provides Santa Fe restaurants and other food service buyers with locally grown produce and dairy from across the state. The system is a subset of the Farm to Restaurant program of the Santa Fe Alliance and has been designed through a collaborative process involving producers, restaurant chefs, Santa Fe Alliance staff and consultants.

FEEDBACK FROM YEAR 2

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Overview:

The Santa Fe Alliance has decided to play an active role in the organization and management of Farm to Restaurant *Delivers*, rather than handing it off to the farmers. Farmer Feedback stated that they would like the Santa Fe Alliance to remain their middle-man with restaurant brokering. We tightened up our system and played a more active role in the distribution than in 2010.

How It Works:

Delivery

- Delivery is available twice weekly during peak produce season (July 1 to October 31) on Wednesdays and Saturdays, as warranted by product availability. (We may have to do once a week during the beginning of the season (July) and the end of the season (October)).

- A base \$25 delivery charge will go with each delivery. However, a \$5 discount will be applied to any order more than \$130 or for twice a week delivery.
- For those that want to pick up, there will be a \$15 pick-up fee at our aggregation point (1807 Second Street-behind Back Road Pizza)

Ordering

- Each restaurant is asked to fill out a projected weekly order sheet. This sheet will be used to provide producers with an estimate of volume needed.
- Weekly updated order sheets are emailed every Wednesday and due back the following Saturday morning by 10:00am for the upcoming week's deliveries.
- Restaurants may request a standing order at any time to receive the same products as the week prior. Beginning in August when most products will be available, we will default to a standing order if a restaurant fails to place an order or to communicate with F2R *Delivers* staff about **not** needing a delivery. In this case the order sheet from the previous week will be used.

Pricing

- Pricing is determined through dialogue between restaurants, producers, and F2R *Delivers* at the beginning of the season in order to ensure that prices are balanced between the true cost of production, cost of distribution, and what the final consumer will pay.

Packing

- All orders will be packed in standard, wax boxes. In order to keep costs minimal for split cases, more than one item may be packed in the same box, in separate plastic bags.
- All boxes will be clearly labeled indicating the producer, the item(s), and the date packed.
- Restaurants are expected to recycle boxes, providing empty boxes to the delivery driver.

Payment/Invoicing

- Restaurants will be provided with an itemized receipt at each delivery.
- Invoices will be sent to restaurants every two weeks, and payment is due within 10 days of invoicing.
- Restaurants that fail to pay their full invoiced amount within two weeks will be placed on Cash on Delivery status and there will be a \$25.00 fee.

Communication

- Communication is essential to the success of this system.
- The primary contact will be with the F2R *Delivers* Coordinator.
- Invoicing questions can be directed to the Bookkeeper for the Santa Fe Alliance.

Changes to the Program:

All Aggregation was In-House

Without La Montanita Coop aggregating for the program, we hired a delivery driver, rented a cargo van, and a central Santa Fe aggregation space and did it all ourselves without contracting out. This was challenging and led to a more successful and less flawed delivery system.

Case Prices

Feedback from both restaurants and farmers indicated that we should offer case options of at least 20lbs at a slightly discounted price. We incorporated this, and the average volume of orders immediately tripled.

Production Planning

From last year's experience, and from hiring a new F2R Delivers Coordinator with experience in this field, we were able to give farmers an estimate of what to plant and how much to plant in the spring. In this dialogue, we were able to get a greater commitment from our participating farmers. We had high demand from our participating restaurants and with this valuable planning, we were able to meet most of that demand. See *Unfulfilled Contracts* and *Weather* in Problems and Delays below.

Activities and Milestones:

2011 Marketing Campaign

- 60 second radio spots were placed with five local radio stations from June to October. This was an in-kind donation to the Santa Fe Alliance in the amount of \$10,000.
- print ads were placed with Santa Fe Reporter (weekly), Green Fire Times (monthly), Edible Santa Fe (quarterly) for a total of \$25,000
- 5000 brochures were printed and distributed throughout the area, at restaurants, at events, etc
- printed magnets for delivery vehicles

Total marketing in-kind and spent \$45,000.

2011 Cook with the Chef

The Cook with the Chef series is a showcase of area chefs featuring their signature dishes yet reflecting the season and ingredients that are available locally. Santa Fe's best known chefs take part, talking about their recipes, their choice of local food sources, preparing a dish, and answering questions. The program is our education

and outreach to the community on the importance of supporting local restaurants that source from local farmers. The program ran for 16 Thursdays from late June to mid-October at Santa Fe Farmers Market. Attendance varied at each event but averaged 50-80 people in the audience each week. Marketing and advertising for these events were in conjunction with advertising as detailed above.

Overview and Statistics of 2011 Season

First Week

7 restaurants ordered
9 farms sourced
Total sales to restaurants: \$1,090.76
Total pounds of veggies moved:
609lb

Second Week

9 restaurants ordered
7 farms sourced
Total sales to restaurants: \$1,879.10
Total pounds of veggies moved:
1,136lb

Third Week

11 restaurants ordered
8 farms sourced
Total sales to restaurants: \$2,748.81
Total pounds of veggies moved:
1,639lb

Fourth Week

12 restaurants ordered
8 farms sourced
Total sales to restaurants: \$3,782.31
Total pounds of veggies moved:
2,070lb

Fifth Week

13 restaurants ordered
8 farms sourced
Total sales to restaurants: \$4,245.97
Total pounds of veggies moved:
2,405

Sixth Week

13 restaurants ordered
11 farms sourced
Total sales to restaurants: \$3,884.13
Total pounds of veggies moved:
2,208lb

Seventh Week

14 restaurants ordered
11 farms sourced
Total sales to restaurants: \$4,056.48
Total pounds of veggies moved:
2,077lb

Eighth Week

15 restaurants ordered
12 farms sourced
Total sales to restaurants: \$4,733.44
Total pounds of veggies moved:
2,495lb

Ninth Week

14 restaurants ordered
11 farms sourced
Total sales to restaurants: \$3,602.95
Total pounds of veggies moved:
2,045lb

Tenth Week

13 restaurants ordered
10 farms sourced
Total sales to restaurants: \$3,842.69
Total pounds of veggies moved:
2,012lb

Eleventh Week

10 restaurants ordered
13 farms sourced
Total sales to restaurants: \$4,436.23
Total pounds of veggies moved:
2,435lb

Thirteenth Week

11 restaurants ordered
15 farms sourced
Total sales to restaurants: \$4,104.35
Total pounds of veggies moved:
2,399lb

Twelfth Week

11 restaurants ordered
14 farms sourced
Total sales to restaurants: \$4,251.78
Total pounds of veggies moved:
2,263lb

Fourteenth Week

10 restaurants ordered
13 farms sourced
Total sales to restaurants: \$3,324.34
Total pounds of veggies moved:
2,010lb

Summary: Total Activity to Date (as of last delivery on 10-15-11): 18 restaurants have placed orders; we've sourced from 17 farms. We have sold \$49,983.34 worth of goods to restaurants, and moved 27,803 pounds of produce!

	Restaurants Who Have Ordered with F2R Delivers		Farms Sourced
1	Amavi	1	Old Windmill Dairy
2	Andiamo!	2	Green Tractor Farm
3	Back Road Pizza	3	Sungreen Living Foods
4	Bon Appetite Mgmt. Co.	4	Synergia
5	Jambo Café	5	Sweet Wood Dairy
6	La Boca	6	Charybda Farms
7	La Casa Sena	7	J&J Farms
8	La Choza	8	La Jolla
9	Plaza Café Southside	9	Jacona Farm
10	Real Food Nation	10	Espanola Valley Farms
11	Red Mesa Cuisine, LLC	11	Gemini Farms
12	Ristra	12	One Straw Farm
13	The Shed	13	Monte Vista Farms
14	Junction	14	El Bosque Garlic Farm
15	Vanessie	15	Manzanar Los Silvestres
16	Walter Burke Catering	16	Red Mountain Farm
17	Dulce Bakery	17	The Fruit Basket
18	Azur		

Problems and Delays:

Unfulfilled Contracts

This was more of an issue in the first year of the project, because we now are working more with farmers who our F2R Delivery Manager has personal relationships with and who have a strong record for high quality and reliability.

The one major breach was with the Agri-Cultura Farm Network, who had projected that they would have over 150lbs of salad-greens for us each week. This projection went down to 0lb as soon as we started delivery. Our manager had to scramble to fill salad mix orders with other farmers in the area for the first few weeks and then we took them off the list all together, loosing thousands of dollars of expected sales in salad mix.

Weather

It was a rough year for New Mexico growers; we had droughts, fires and then flash floods to follow in some areas. Many lost their crops. Additionally, we had a deep freeze at the beginning of May and there was very little fruit this year. Some farmers in the program mentioned that it was the worst year for farming that they had seen in Northern New Mexico in 30 years.

Santa Fe Aggregation Point Challenges

We learned that our rented Santa Fe aggregation point was less than ideal after we moved in. The very large walk-in cooler put off high heat and was very noisy. Even with all of the fans and swamp cooler, it remained 90 degrees in there at all times.

The noise from the cooler and fans make it impossible to hear phone calls, and we couldn't pick up wireless internet there, so our plans of it also functioning as an office space were unrealistic. Our manager had to drive back and forth from the office to the aggregation space to receive deliveries from our farmers, which was inefficient.

Awards and Recognition:

Pinon Award

Presented to Santa Fe Alliance by Santa Fe Community Foundation for best Visionary Nonprofit.

RBEG Grant

Awarded \$24,100 by NM USDA Rural Development for technical assistance to farmers for participation in Farm to Restaurant Project.

Other Donations

- Stokes Family Foundation - \$4000 for general operations of Farm to Restaurant
- Oppenhiemer - \$20,000 for general operations of Farm to Restaurant
- McCune - \$20,000 for general operations of Santa Fe Alliance to run Farm to Restaurant
- Griswald - \$1000 for supplies for Farm to Restaurant

Other Fundraising

Through other efforts and events (dinners at participating restaurants, special invitation-only events) we were able to raise an additional \$10,000 for general operations for Santa Fe Alliance to run Farm to Restaurant Project.

This report is available on our website as a resource for other Farm to Restaurant programs around the country to learn from and our How-To manual is available to everyone in the BALLE Network (Business Alliance for Local Living Economies).