

FY 2012

FY 2012 Rensselaer County, NY: Utilizing and Assessing Cooperative Advertising and Marketing for Farmers' Markets, Farm Stands, and CSAs in Rensselaer County

Nonprofit, Low income consumers, Producer Association, New Direct Marketing, CSA Network, Events and Outreach, Existing EBT

Project Summary:

\$23,174.00 to Rensselaer County of Troy, NY, to implement a print advertising campaign to increase the number of customers shopping at farmers' markets, farm stands, and CSAs and increase the sale of locally-grown farm products in Rensselaer County. The campaign will consist of newspaper advertisements, a weekly newsletter, signage, and a map of local farm stands and farmers markets giving contact information, hours, and products. Fifty farmers will increase their sales among their 500,000 potential customers.

Final Report

Farmers Market Promotion Program

Final Performance Report

For the Period of October 1, 2012–September 30, 2014

Date: October 10, 2014

Recipient Name: Rensselaer County, NY

Project Title: Utilizing and Assessing Cooperative Advertising and Marketing for Farmers' Markets, Farmstands and CSAs in Rensselaer County

Grant Number: 12-25-G-1605

Project Location: Troy, NY

Year of Grant Award: 2012

Amount Awarded: \$23,174.00

Contact: Donna Murray (518) 270-2668/dmurray@rensco.com

Program Summary:

Accomplishments:

Rensselaer County raised greater awareness of farmers' markets, farmstands and CSAs through its promotional campaign. By partnering with Rensselaer County Tourism, Rensselaer County Economic Development & Planning was able to leverage federal funds and provide more opportunities for advertisements in local and regional publications. As a result, Rensselaer County Tourism attracted significantly more visitors to the website. Through the distribution of over 5,000 farm maps, Rensselaer County provided potential visitors with information to locate farmers' markets, farmstands and CSA's throughout the county. The North Greenbush Farmers' erected five signs throughout the town resulting in higher visibility and an increase in the number of customers attending the market. Vendors as well as customers provided positive feedback regarding the improved signage for the farmers' market.

Goals and Objectives:

- To increase the number of customers shopping at farmers' markets, farmstands and CSA's in Rensselaer County.
- To increase the sale of locally grown product in Rensselaer County.

Activities:

- 29 display ads were featured in 7 publications in 2013 and 2014. The publications were distributed both locally and regionally.
- 4 signs were erected to promote the farmers' markets.
- 5,000 farm maps were distributed at the Capital District Garden and Flower Show, Schaghticoke Fair, NYS Fair, Gold Orchards Apple Festival, Troy Farmers' Market, North Greenbush Farmers' Market and farmstands and farm stores throughout the county. An additional 15,000 maps will be distributed in 2015.
- The "Keep it Growing" advertising campaign was featured on the Rensselaer County Tourism website (renscotourism.com) as well as the display advertisements listed above.

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Beneficiaries:

- 47 farms included on the farm map
 - 62 farms included on the Rensselaer County Tourism website at renscotourism.com
- 5 farms participating in North Greenbush Farmers' Market

Lessons Learned:

- The county tourism program is a beneficial partner to expand advertisement opportunities for farmers who retail their products. The tourism program offers cooperative advertising for participating businesses. This program should be expanded to include more retail farm operations and other counties in the region.
- The project leader was unable to develop effective monitoring tools to determine the overall success of the display ads and distribution of the farm maps. Due to the large number of businesses participating, it was difficult to identify the exact marketing efforts impacting overall sales due to other marketing tools, i.e. FaceBook, websites, television, radio, etc. In order to implement effective marketing tools, a more specific strategy should be utilized, i.e. special promotion, coupons or frequent buyer's card.
- Due to the funding provided by FMPP, increased consumer awareness was generated via the display ads, tourism website and farm maps. Continued efforts to promote retail agriculture businesses in the county and region will make more customers aware of locally grown products.