

New Food Commons Project

Appalachian Center for Economic Networks of Athens, OH received \$36,500 to build a market network to support emerging farmers markets in a rural, three-county area. Funds were used to recruit and train vendors; allow the redemption of EBT, WIC, and the Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program (SFMNP) allotments; and link the three markets to one another using the EBT expertise of the Athens Farmers Market.

Final Report

Final Performance Report

Date: June 28, 2010

Recipient Name: Appalachian Center for Economic Networks (ACEnet)

Title of Project: New Food Commons Project

Grant Number: 12-25-G-0743

Location: Athens, Ohio 45701

Report Timeframe: October 2010 – June 2010

Project Summary

The **New Food Commons Project** goals were to build a new market network that supported the growth of small, rural farmers markets by recruiting and training vendors; increasing markets sales viability with the redemption of EBT, WIC and SFMNP; and linking the small, rural markets to one another and the leveraging of assets of a mature, regional market. Farmers will have access to new markets and increased sales; low-income residents will have more frequent access to fresh, local produce and products within their rural towns; and communities will have viable markets to encourage social engagement and civic pride.

The resulting benefits included the formation and/or expansion of four farmers markets: the Athens Farmers Market, The Trimble Township Market, the Chesterhill Farmers Market and the Shawnee Farmers Market. Other area farmers markets: the Morgan County Farmers Market, the Somerset Farmers Market, New Lexington Farmers Market and the Chesterhill Produce Auction also participated in vendor marketing workshops and EBT training during the grant program.



Project Approach

Goal: 1.) Recruit, train and support vendors for the three, rural markets.

Objective 1a – Established farmers and food producers are identified as anchor vendors for the emerging, rural markets.

Outcomes: During the grant period, ACEnet staff provided assistance in recruiting and training vendors at the Athens Farmers Market and the following small, rural markets: Trimble Township, Chesterhill, Shawnee, Somerset, New Lexington and Morgan County-MConnellsville Farmers Markets. In total, technical assistance and support was provided to six rural markets due to a growing demand for services.

The smaller, rural markets in Athens, Morgan and Perry counties have continued to grow. All the markets now have volunteer market managers and anchor vendors.

With the assistance of the Perry County Health Department our market clients have been assisted with coop marketing and insurance coverage. Most of the markets are still small, but throughout the season each market has 8 to 24 vendors participating. Two of the rural market managers: Angel Seurkamp in Shawnee and Amanda Hite in Somerset have been extremely helpful in assisting with the coordination and scheduling of vendor workshops in Perry County.

The Athens Farmers Market increased to over 100 vendors participate in the market sometime during spring-summer-fall market season. AFM is a year round market and starting in Jan. 2010 has partnered with the mall (Market on State) to hold part of the market inside between Jan through March. Although about 8 to 10 vendors remained outside in the parking lot over 20 vendors' set-up inside. This has been a plus for additional farm vendor recruitment. Many specialty crop vendors participated in a spring high tunnel workshop to extend their growing season to take advantage of this new indoor opportunity.

Two other FMPP funded regional partners: the Perry County Health Department and the Ohio Farmers Market Management Network have also provided tremendous support on the recruitment, training and support for the smaller rural markets. A new brochure that maps our overlapping market clients has just been made available and ACENet is assisting with its circulation and promotion.

Objective 1b – Identify, train and coach community gardeners to become new vendors at the emerging, rural markets.

Outcomes: Since the spring of 2009 ACENet and Community Food Initiatives have started four new community gardens in the communities of Trimble, Chauncey, Nelsonville and Chesterhill. We have also worked with Perry County partners to start a community garden in Shawnee, also with a youth production component. All the gardens have additional community gardeners in year two production.

Existing community gardens have expanded to include many more community and youth gardeners at the Hope Youth Production Garden (YEAH), the Hope Community Gardens, the Hope Kid's Discovery Garden, Glouster Gardens, Stewart Community Gardens and the Athens Westside Gardens. We estimate at least 3 youth production coops will sell at the Athens Farmers Market, Trimble Township and the Shawnee Farmers Market this year. CFI has recruited adult volunteers to dedicate about 6 hours a month as 4H Advisors for our Trimble Red Hot Chili Pepper club. They are mentoring the youth participants this season on basic gardening, composting, and cooking skills as well as help them sell at the Trimble Township Farmers Market.



A number of workshops occurred and additional trainings were scheduled targeting youth production and community gardens. This gardening season, Community Food Initiatives will present their on-going workshop series called Appalachian Foodways to honor and revive the tradition of food self-sufficiency in our region.. Because of lifestyle changes, much of this knowledge is being lost. The workshops were timed throughout the growing and harvesting season. Workshop topics include cover gardening skills on how to grow organic gardens, compost, and harvest rain water. Various foods skills will be taught such as how to make noodles, wild-yeasted breads, can tomatoes, pickling basics and make your own vinegar. Some of the workshops will cover foods that reflect the influence of the cultural diversity that has been a part of the Athens community for decades. Workshops began in March and run through October. They are open to all ages. Workshops are free to all CFI members. For non-members the cost is \$5 per class. A work-trade arrangement can be made by request.



The 2010 May and June Appalachian Foodways

The May series began on Monday, May 17 with Organic Gardening Basics, 7 pm at ACENet, 94 Columbus Road, Athens. This workshop will be repeated on Thursday, May 20 at 6:30 pm at the Nelsonville Public Library. On Thursday the 27th, 6:30 p.m., Front Yard Gardening will be presented at ACENet, with good ideas on how to make your front yard a beautiful and productive food garden. June workshops included: *June 22, 7:00pm at Nelsonville Comm. Garden:* Hands on compost workshop, including bin construction. Nelsonville Community Garden, behind C&E Hardware and *June 24, 7:00pm at ACENet:* "The Basic Art of Pickling" with Joyce Shriner of OSU extension.

This year our goal is that community gardeners continue to sell fresh produce, but also extend the number of weeks at the markets by selling value-added, herbal and bakery products. Last season's classes were a good start for value-adding, but we hope to have many more community garden vendors selling into the fall and winter markets. We also have pending funding for the construction of high tunnels at two of the community gardens for the production of early greens in 2011. The challenge with the smaller, rural markets is how to get

enough production in place to start the markets in the spring as opposed to late May or June.

Objective 1c – Partners will aggregate established and new vendor training between all three emerging markets, the Athens Farmers Market and other regional and national experts in the field.

ACENet and CFI have facilitated trainings primarily in Athens and Perry counties. The Perry county trainings for the Shawnee and Trimble Township markets focused on the development of market best practices and management. A number of workshops also targeted new vendors developing labels, exploring value-adding and operating under the Ohio Food Cottage Law. The complete list of workshops targeted to youth, community gardeners and farmers follows in the chart. ACENet and CFI have facilitated trainings primarily in Athens and Perry counties. The Perry county trainings for the Shawnee and Trimble Township markets focused on the development of market best practices and management. A number of workshops also targeted new vendors developing labels, exploring value-adding and operating under the Ohio Food Cottage Law. The complete list of workshops targeted to youth, community gardeners and farmers follows in the chart. Most of the workshops have had 10 to 20 participants on average.

Date	Title	Teacher	Location
4/28 Tues	Gardening 101	Liz Shaw	WCG
5/5 Tues	Terrific Tomatoes	Liz Shaw	WCG
5/7 Thurs	Foodways Thursdays Tofu Demystified	Sue Zano of the Farmacy	ACENet
5/14 Thurs	Small Space Garden Design	Paul Tomcho Krista Duvall	WCG
5/19 Tues	Composting Success	Steve Orth	WCG
5/20 Wed	Terrific Tomatoes	Liz Shaw/Patty Nally	Lottridge
5/26 Tues	Edible Container Gardening	Liz Shaw	WCG
6/2 Tues	Companion Planting	Darleen Innis	WCG
6/4 Thurs	Foodways Thursdays Jelly and Jam-boree	Liz Shaw	ACENet
6/9 Tues	Bug-off! Organic Pest Control for the Garden	Caty Crabb	WCG
6/16 Tues	Mulch Madness	Patty Nally	WCG
6/18 Thurs	Foodways Thursdays Kids in the Kitchen!	Liz Shaw	ACENet
6/23 Tues	WCG Potluck-- Beekeeping in SE Ohio	John McGovern Ed Newman	WCG
6/24 Wed	Kids in the Kitchen	Liz Shaw	Lottridge
6/30 Tues	Herb Gardening Success	Companion Plants	WCG
7/7	Kids in the Garden	Liz Shaw	WCG
7/9 Thurs	Foodways Thursdays--Adventures in Pickling	Liz Shaw	ACENet
7/23 Thurs	Foodways Thursdays--Pressure Canning Garden Produce	Liz Shaw	ACENet
7/28 Tues	WCG Potluck-- Food Security in SE Ohio	Keith Peterson David Holben Paul Clever	WCG
8/6 Thurs	Foodways Thursdays Home Made IceCream	Tim Stephens Ronda Clark	ACENet
8/20 Thurs	Foodways Thursdays Freezing Garden Produce	Liz Shaw and	ACENet
8/25 Tues	WCG Potluck Solar Systems in SE Ohio	3 rd Sun Solar	WCG
9/3 Thurs	Foodways Thursdays Salsa – Hot ‘n Mild	Casa Cantina	ACENet
9/17 Thurs	Foodways Thursdays	Steve Orth	ACENet

	Homemade Jerky		
9/22	WCG Potluck 2010 Garden Plans	WCG Team Leaders	WCG
10/1 Thurs	Foodways Thursdays Cooking and Baking with Winter Squash	Ronda Clark	ACENet
10/15 Thurs	Foodways Thursdays Creative Bread Baking	Avalanche Pizza	ACENet
10/29 Thurs	Foodways Thursdays Old-timey Sausage Making	Mike Bycofski	ACENet



All of the Farmer Market series power point presentations and resources have been posted to two different communities on www.ohiofoodshed.org in the Public Web Market and Farmers Markets “best practices” sections. Our goal is to continue to draw market vendors to these resources and ultimately engage them more fully to post their resources and network more effectively with one another online. Photo and a few videos from the various farmers market can also be viewed in the Ohio Foodshed Online Community section. ACENet has on-going funding for face-to-face workshops, webinars and the online communities development. In July I will be delivering 2 additional workshops on the Ohio Cottage Food Law, labeling regulations and value-adding food science issues. The volunteer market manager and anchor vendors have been crucial in promoting the trainings and we foresee many future workshops will be scheduled due to their prompting.

Rural market managers and vendors have also participated in other regional and state trainings provided by the Ohio Farmer Market Management Network. We are encouraging the smaller, rural market members to become more involved in other webinar trainings provided by OFMMN and national groups like the Farmers Market Coalition. In Ohio our strongest partnerships is with OFMMN. Project director, Christie Welch and I frequently connect over support needs for the markets. Appalachian Regional Commission funding secured through OFMMN will also support our client markets with additional collaborative marketing and promotion.

Goal Activity 2.) Increase the financial viability and long-term sustainability of small, rural markets through partnerships and shared assets.

Objective 2a – Partner with the Athens Farmers Market and the State Ohio Department of Job and Family Services to utilize a shared, centralized EBT system at the Glouster, Chesterhill and Middleport markets and advocate for these market to become eligible for WIC-FMNP and SFMNP.

Over the course of trainings and outreach on market organization, management development and EBT systems, more rural Appalachia Ohio farmers markets have become involved in the scope of the project. The Athens Farmers Market remains the flagship rural market with the longest EBT track record. Athens had the highest EBT redemption in the state in 2009 of all participating farmers markets. According to the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services the Athens Farmers Market EBT redemption numbers for 2009 were \$21,942. The Athens Farmers Market was number 1 out of 17 markets and had the highest grossing redemption of any all year or seasonal farmers market.

Total aggregated redemption with 17 markets participating for 2009 was \$49,715 ---- AFM activity resulted in 44% of all EBT activity at farmers markets in Ohio. Our rural market exceeded the activity in “all year” urban markets.

Objective 2b -- Coordinate the efforts of the Athens County, Morgan County, and Meigs County tourism bureaus, the county public housing authorities, WIC office, Job and Family Services, pantries, homeless shelters, group

homes, senior center, healthcare, residential treatment and legal services staff to disseminate marketing promotions and nutrition education materials.

All the network partners have assisted with the on-going marketing efforts to promote the established and new markets. Local press and media have helped spread the word. Recent news clips and coverage is attached to the report. The WIC office continues to table at the Athens area markets. Ohio University College of Medicine has hosted free health screenings at the markets. The county senior centers have promoted the market with posters and educated their clients about SFMNP. Market posters, training fliers and marketing materials are available to the agency partners. Examples are attached with the report.

Goal Activity 3.) Build the organizational capacity of the small, rural markets by forming a regional network and linking the network to state, regional and national expertise.

Objective 3a – Connect the vendors, market leadership and community officeholders in the small, rural communities to the “best practices” of farmers market and local food systems.

During the grant period the Athens Food Policy Council was formed to promote local food systems in Athens County. Other networks, mentioned earlier are the Ohio Farmers Market Management Network and the Appalachian Farmers Market Initiative. Market managers have participated in the Ohio Department of Agriculture’s Local Food Roundtables. Trainings linked vendors and community gardeners to other online resources from the Farmers Market Coalition, Project for Public Spaces, Growing for Market and numerous state and national community gardening resources.

The accomplishments of the markets could not have occurred without the support of the FMPP funding. As mentioned earlier all the markets have committed volunteer managers and a growing number of vendors. Over the past 18 months the organizational capacity of each market continues to professionalize. The Farmers Market series trainings in 2009 and 2010 have been an impetus for improved stalls, business practices and promotions. Many of the second year markets have developed signage, logos and marketing materials to promote themselves.

Goals and Outcomes Achieved

Area schools, city councils, religious groups, the Athens Metropolitan Housing Authority and the Hocking-Athens-Perry Community Action Program are all donated land for community gardens in the 4 county area to promote community gardens and local food systems. Collaborators have also connected farm and food entrepreneurs to other ACEnet food and farm programs and services. More vendors are now utilizing ACEnet’s

Food Ventures Center (12,000 sq. ft. food incubator) for value-added. The area tourism bureaus have been great friends in promoting the markets. The new Appalachian Market brochures will also be a great resource to share with collaborators. The photo illustrates some of the tourism promotion of local foods and markets. A new culinary tourism brand initiative called the 30 Mile Meal will help promote farmers market tours to both visitors and locals alike.



Beneficiaries.

Farmers, local food producers and low-income residents in Athens, Meigs, Morgan and Perry county benefited from the project:

- Area farmers and local food vendors increased their sales
- All the farmers markets had increased vendor participation

- All the farmers market added EBT as a financial transaction option and the Athens Farmers Market increased their redemption
- Low income customers from the villages and townships had better access to fresh produce and locally produced foods

Lessons Learned.

During the course of the grant period it became clear that each of the markets needed to run their own EBT programs. Our state office also encouraged this and Ohio Department of Agriculture has supported the start up phase with a new grant program launched in 2009 and continuing into 2010.

The Shawnee and Somerset Markets have been approved for EBT redemption and will start this month. The Trimble Township Market and the Morgan County-McConnelsville Markets should have EBT in place sometime in July. Both Shawnee and Somerset have been awarded an Ohio Department of Agriculture grant to support EBT implementation. Once EBT is verified, we will apply for funding for Trimble Township and Morgan County. The Chesterhill Farmers Market has still not decided whether they will move forward with EBT. It is a primarily



Amish market and it may mean that only the market manager’s business might apply. WIC redemption is occurring at 4 markets and SFMNP is at 5 markets.

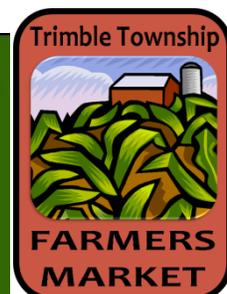
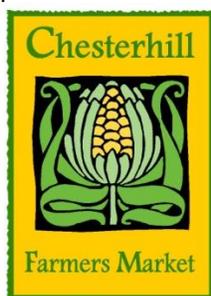


The biggest challenge with the small, rural markets is to first stabilize them as markets. We have learned that starting EBT in year 2 or 3 of the markets’ development has been the pattern. Getting volunteer market managers, anchors and vendors to participate in training and focusing on market organizational capacity building was crucial prior to the introduction of EBT. During the period of the grant the Middleport Farmers Market suspended operations, but a new Meigs County Farmers and Artisan Market in Pomeroy is starting. It is still too early to tell whether this new market will be ready for EBT in 2010. If the market survives the 2010 season, we will engage them in EBT training in the fall for next year.

I’m feeling positive that the markets are now ready for test running with EBT, WIC and SFMNP during the summer and fall seasons. Staff and Board members from the Athens Farmers Market are still engaged to coach and support the smaller markets staff. I feel confident once the EBT transactions begin, vendors will see a significant growth in sales at these markets. SFMNP this year has already brought new customers and the market mangers are encouraging customers to spread the word about EBT.

Additional Information:

The accomplishments of the markets could not have occurred without the support of the FMPP funding. As mentioned earlier all the markets have committed volunteer managers and a growing number of vendors. Over the past 18 months the organizational capacity of each market continues to professionalize. The Farmers Market series trainings in 2009 and 2010 have been an impetus for improved stalls, business practices and promotions. Many of the second year markets have developed signage, logos and marketing materials to promote themselves. Examples are pictured below and the following page.






SOUTHERN PERRY
Basic Backyard Garden Workshop

Get your backyard vegetable garden off to a good start this year.

Learn the Basics of Backyard Gardening. Join George Palmer, Master Gardener and Leslie Schaller, ACEnet's Business Counselor as we learn how to: Prepare your Site, Choose Healthy Plants and Seeds, and Pest Prevention & Disease Management.

You can also find out how to be an entrepreneur with your garden surplus!

Two informative classes will be held in Shawnee **Monday, April 13th from 6-8 pm** and **Monday, April 20th from 6-8 pm** (location to be determined, please call) To register, please call Angel Seukamp at 394-2975

If you are interested in being a vendor at the Shawnee Farmers Market this year please plan to attend.

Free Seeds will be given away!
Gardening-Related Door Prizes!

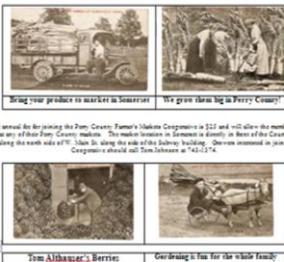
For more information contact Angel Seukamp at 394-2975

SOMERSET'S FARMER'S MARKET
On the Public Square
Every Saturday 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.
May thru October

Just like it was for over a hundred years, a farmer's market is returning to town!

It will be a great place to get fresh produce or to make extra money by selling your garden's extra harvest.

PRODUCE PLANTS BAKED GOODS



Bring your produce to market in Somerset We grow them big in Perry County!

The award for joining the Perry County Farmers Market Program is \$25 and will allow the member to sell at any of those Perry County markets. The market location in Somerset is directly in front of the Courthouse and along the north side of 7th Street. In along the side of the bakery building. Openness increased in joining the Program is shared with Tom Johnson at 742-1174.

Tom Johnson's Berries Celebrating in fun for the whole family!

Perry County Farmers' Markets' Cooperative

NEW! Saturdays - 9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. - 1150 W. Main Street
Somerset - Tuesdays - 10:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. - 1150 W. Main Street
Franklinville - Mondays - 10:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. - 1150 W. Main Street
Shawnee - Fridays - 4:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m. - 1150 W. Main Street

Presents:

The Backyard Garden Series
Second Saturdays 2:00 p.m. at the old courthouse in Somerset, OH

Saturday May 5th 9:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.
Backyard Garden Basics
FREE ADMISSION

Saturday June 12th 9:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.
Herbs and Nutrition
FREE ADMISSION

Saturday July 10th 9:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.
Preserving the Harvest
FREE ADMISSION

Saturday August 14th 9:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.
Heirloom Tomato Tasting & Seed Saver's Exchange
FREE ADMISSION

Ohio Director Carol Angell of Perry County Farmers' Markets' Cooperative
For more info call: (740) 742-1174

Sponsored by:
OSU Extension, Perry County
Family Nutrition Program

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