

FY 2012**FY 2012** Pennsylvania Association for Sustainable Agriculture**Nonprofit, Low income consumers, New Direct Marketing, Training & Technical Assistance for Farmers & Market Managers, Youth, State-Wide Implementation**

\$89,546 to the Pennsylvania Association for Sustainable Agriculture of Millheim, Pennsylvania, to expand direct producer-to-consumer marketing program in Pennsylvania by broadening the messaging of Buy Fresh Buy Local® (BFBL). It will develop expanded BFBL messaging and designs, create web and print toolkit resources, mount a promotional campaign, provide guidance for farmers, market managers, BFBL chapters and community organizations, hold workshops for market managers and vendors in low-income areas, and provide statewide and nationwide training for BFBL chapters to share best practices and project results.

[Final Report](#)

**Farmers Market Promotion Program
Final Performance Report
For the Period of October 1, 2012 - September 30, 2014**

Date: December 3, 2014

Recipient Name: Pennsylvania Association for Sustainable Agriculture (PASA)

Project Title: Making Markets Thrive: Broadening the Reach of Buy Fresh Buy Local® in Pennsylvania

Grant Number: 12-25-G-1627

Project Location: Millheim, PA

Year of Grant Award: 2012

Amount Awarded: \$89,546

Contact: Michele Spencer / 814-349-9856 / michele@pasafarming.org

Project Summary:

The Pennsylvania Association for Sustainable Agriculture (PASA), the nation's largest statewide membership-based sustainable farming organization, has been *promoting profitable farms that produce healthy food for all people while respecting the natural environment* for over twenty years. PASA recognizes that sustainable economic development and sustainable agricultural practices are inextricably linked, and that Pennsylvania (PA) farmers play a key role in providing food for communities. "*Making Markets Thrive: Broadening the Reach of Buy Fresh Buy Local® in Pennsylvania*" aimed to help both farmers and communities grow support for their markets.

The goal of this project was to broaden and diversify the customer base of farmers markets in Pennsylvania by expanding the messaging and resources of the PA Buy Fresh Buy Local® (BFBL) program to attract additional population segments to shop at farmers markets, especially low-income women with children, low-income seniors and minorities. PASA fostered an expanded statewide BFBL marketing campaign by developing broader BFBL messaging, toolkits and trainings for BFBL chapters, by modeling and evaluating an integrated marketing and educational support program to build the capacity of farmers markets in western Pennsylvania, and by sharing best practices and results through the PA BFBL network, the national FoodRoutes Network, LLC and our partners at the Farmers Market Coalition.

Rapid Market Assessments (RMA) were also completed for the Wilkesburg Farmers Market, New Castle Farmers Market and Fay-Penn's Uniontown Farmers Market to determine baseline market data. RMAs are a simple tool that markets can use to take a snapshot of a market and evaluate areas for growth and improvement.

The most impressive results measurement of this project:

1.) A vast array of new promotional materials to expand and diversify the customer base of farmers markets across the state of Pennsylvania.

- 100 coroplast BFBL partner signs with cardboard easels
- 10,000 point of purchase cards
- 400 farmers market rack slips

- 1600 recipe cards
- 1600 FMNP recipe cards
- 1400 WIC & FMNP flyers & 200 posters
- 500 Spanish version Good Reasons to buy local at farmers markets poster
- 14 Buy Fresh Buy Local vinyl banners
- 40 posters listing Pittsburgh Farmers Markets which accept EBT
- 1000 Western PA Buy Fresh Buy Local® point of purchase cards
- 750 postcards listing Pittsburgh Farmers Markets which accept EBT
- 11,000 Buy Fresh Buy Local bumper stickers
- 12 posters listing Farmers Markets that accept EBT inside of City of Pittsburgh Port Authority buses (fall 2013 and summer 2014)
- 9 Buy Fresh Buy Local signs on the side of City of Pittsburgh Port Authority buses (fall 2013 and summer 2014)
- 600 Harvest for the Hungry event flyers (promoting donations of produce at markets to local food pantries)
- 144 Buy Fresh Buy Local Partner Window Cling stickers
- 100 Buy Fresh Buy Local Partner Vinyl Flags

2.) As a result of the funding from FMPP, we were able to revitalize three waning markets in high-need, low-income food desert communities. By collaborating with three target farmers markets and working one-on-one with market managers to assess markets and develop new promotional strategies we worked to help retain vendors and increase and diversify the markets' customer bases. As a result of the new promotional campaigns, all three market managers reported in phone interviews conducted in the fall of 2014 that their markets had increased sales between 2012-2014 and increased customer traffic. In Uniontown, farmers market vendor participation doubled, while New Castle and Wilksburg had good vendor retention, with all their vendors staying with the market over 2012-2014. In New Castle, the market manager reported that the increased customer traffic "was obvious, very visual change to the market; our market is really growing!"

Goals and Objectives

Project Goals:

The goals and objectives of this project were to 1.) broaden and diversify the customer base of farmers markets in Pennsylvania by expanding the messaging and resources of the PA BFBL program to attract additional population segments to shop at farmers markets, especially low-income women with children, low-income seniors and minorities, and 2.) foster an expanded statewide BFBL marketing campaign by a.) developing broader BFBL messaging, toolkits and trainings for BFBL chapters, b.) model and evaluate an integrated marketing and educational support program to build the capacity of farmers markets in western PA, and c.) share best practices and results through the PA BFBL network and the national FoodRoutes network.

Project Need:

Direct marketing is a significant component of agriculture in PA. According to the 2007 United States Census of Agriculture, PA ranks third in the nation for direct marketing to consumers, and the number of farm operations selling via direct markets increased 24% from 2002 to 2007. However, there are still significant challenges within the PA food system related to local food marketing and local food access. Farmers and market managers, who have busy schedules and tight budgets, do not always have the capacity to effectively promote farmers markets to a broad and diverse consumer public, and the presence of food deserts in PA indicates that healthy local food is neither available nor accessible to all people.

Issues related to local food marketing and local food access are especially critical in the western region of the state. In 2010, PASA facilitated the Regional Food Infrastructure Network (RFIN) survey and found that 41% of farmers in western PA identified a need for marketing assistance, specifically identifying consumer education, regional marketing, promotion of the BFBL program and development of new marketing strategies as priority areas of need.

While the city of Pittsburgh, the urban center of western PA, has seen strong growth in direct marketing opportunities, PASA hears from farmers who report challenges in connecting with and marketing to their local rural communities outside of metropolitan areas. Other marketing challenges are presented by the low-income status of much of western PA. According to the 2010 county-level poverty rates reported by the USDA ERS, two of the three low-income counties in the state, Fayette and Forest, are located in western PA and all of western PA counties are classified within the economically distressed Appalachian Region.

In western PA and throughout the state, there is still a significant base of consumer dollars that remain to be captured by farmers markets. For example, PASA's RFIN study found that consumers in the region spend a total of \$7.9 billion on food, and of that, only \$13 million was spent on local produce directly from farmers. These numbers indicate that there is plenty of opportunity for farmers market sales to grow as more people make the choice to purchase food from local producers. Low-income communities present not only new opportunities for farmers to expand their customer base, but also new opportunities for farmers to improve access to healthy food to more people.

Tierney Manning, a Masters student at Chatham University, used mapping images to study the change in the size of food deserts in Pittsburgh when farmers markets are open in the summer, compared to the winter months when only grocery stores are available. She found that the size of food deserts shrinks during months when farmers markets are active and produce is available. Clearly, marketing local foods in low-income communities is a win-win endeavor. Farmers benefit from the expanded consumer base, and low-income communities benefit from improved access to and availability of healthy, fresh food.

Key opportunities connecting farmers and underserved individuals in PA include 1.) the Farmers Market Nutrition Program (FMNP), distributed to both the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) participants and senior citizens across the state, and 2.) outreach to the growing Latino community. In PA, the redemption rate of FMNP dollars in 2011 was only 54%, which translates to lost revenue just shy of \$1.5 million to Pennsylvania farmers. This project was aimed to capitalize on the opportunity afforded to farmers and low-income communities through FMNP. The project targeted underserved populations through the BFBL marketing campaign and by developing tools and resources that make it easier for this demographic to find farmers markets to redeem their coupons.

In addition to low-income audiences, the growing Spanish-speaking community is another important opportunity for farmers in PA. The Latino population in PA grew by 80% between 2000 and 2010. Pittsburgh's Spanish-speaking population grew by 50% during that time and in Philadelphia, Latinos now make up over 12% of the population. Farmers and farmers market managers do not always have the Spanish language skills or resources to effectively communicate and promote their products to this demographic. This project also developed marketing materials and BFBL resources in Spanish to help farmers markets reach this important customer base in culturally appropriate ways.

PASA is well positioned to facilitate a project that will help farmers expand and diversify their customer base and also help more people find and choose local foods. As part of our outreach to strengthen agricultural marketing and farm profitability while supporting the development of community food systems, PASA coordinates the BFBL program in PA and also works nationwide through FoodRoutes Network LLC, a project of PASA.

BFBL is a national campaign that helps consumers find, choose and appreciate locally grown foods and supports the farmers and lands that produce them. PASA promotes the purchase and consumption of locally-grown foods through BFBL, and chapters across the country have adapted the brand to reflect foods grown in their respective regions. BFBL has seen nationwide success using its label to brand locally-grown foods. The compelling, attractive BFBL brand creates a positive emotional association for locally-grown foods, thus enhancing their value.

BFBL has been proven as a highly successful, nationwide campaign to connect consumers to local foods. It is evident, however, that its current strategic messaging focused on taste, freshness and seasonality, variety and quality are targeting a core audience of consumers who have already embraced the "buy local" message and regularly search out locally-grown foods. In addition, the existing marketing materials in PA are only produced in English, thus do not reach the growing Spanish-speaking community. This proposal sought to expand the ability of the BFBL campaign to engage a larger, more diverse community of consumers, particularly low-income women with children, low-income senior citizens and Spanish-speakers by developing messaging that addressed issues relevant to their food purchasing decisions, especially related to affordability, convenience, time and safety. *"Making Markets Thrive: Broadening the Reach of Buy Fresh Buy Local® in Pennsylvania,"* a direct producer-to-consumer

marketing program, will develop new channels to communicate new messages to a wider and more diverse audience. The long-term impacts of increased demand for locally-grown foods have the potential to enhance the economic viability of our farmers while improving food access and the health of both PA residents and the local economy.

In a 2010 PASA membership survey, only 8% of respondents reported that they were very satisfied with their operation's profitability, and 45% of respondents indicated household incomes of under \$40,000. Farmers in Pennsylvania need improved profitability in order to sustain viable agricultural businesses. Survey respondents indicated farmers markets as their most valuable direct marketing activity, but farmers and market managers, who have busy schedules and tight budgets, do not always have the capacity to effectively promote farmers markets to a broad and diverse consumer public. Survey respondents ranked the Farmers Market Nutrition Program (FMNP) as the least important direct marketing strategy, and the majority of respondents (79%) reported not using it at all. Clearly farmers need marketing assistance to expand their customer base, and they need better tools and resources to understand the opportunity to reach more customers and increase sales through the FMNP.

Our goal is to grow the Western PA local food economy by developing a direct producer-to-consumer marketing program, thereby improving access to locally grown foods and educating consumers about the benefits of choosing these foods. Over the long term, the resulting ascent in the consumption of locally grown foods has the potential to increase the economic viability of our farmers while improving the health of both our residents and local economy.

The marketing program requires an initial investment but will afterward be sustainable. All lessons learned and strategies used were shared with the other 57 BFBL chapters through monthly telephone conferences and the interactive group website. The toolkit created has been shared with community partners, throughout PA and with 70 BFBL chapters nationally. BFBL is a highly successful national campaign with proven traction in connecting consumers to local food systems, and this project lays further groundwork for a newly revitalized BFBL network in PA and across the US.

Describe the activities used to achieve the goals and objectives:

1.) Market Research: Focus Groups

Focus groups were conducted in the first stage of the project to understand perceived challenges and opportunities for expanding the customer base for locally-grown and produced food and identify priorities in promotional materials, education and outreach. Between February-April 2013, PASA worked with Social Impact Studios to organize and conduct a total of three focus groups, engaging a total 20 participants in three target regions across the state of Pennsylvania: Philadelphia, Pittsburgh and Harrisburg. Following the focus groups, Social Impact Studios developed a first round of test designs and messaging based on this initial research. These test designs and messages were shared with Buy Fresh Buy Local® chapter leaders for further refinement, based on their feedback, designs and materials were finalized.

2.) Market Research: Regional Baseline Data Collection

Rapid Market Assessments (RMA) were completed in August and September 2013 at three western Pennsylvania farmers markets that were named in this project - Wilkesburg Farmers Market, New Castle Farmers Market and Fay-Penn's Uniontown Farmers Market - to determine baseline market data.

3.) Buy Fresh Buy Local® Toolkit Development

Upon completion of the focus groups, PASA staff worked with Social Impact Studios to develop new resources for Buy Fresh Buy Local Chapters and our target western Pennsylvania Farmers Markets in English and Spanish.

Our new marketing materials highlighting acceptance of SNAP and FMNP benefits at certain markets including banners, posters, postcards, and educational rack slips and recipe cards were completed and were distributed to all Buy Fresh Buy Local Chapter Partners in Western Pennsylvania. Electronic files were also shared with all Pennsylvania Buy Fresh Buy Local Chapter Coordinators so they have access for future printings of these materials as well.

4.) Regional Level: Western Pennsylvania Buy Fresh Buy Local Chapter Campaign Implementation in Targeted Low Income Communities

The Wilkesburg Farmers Market printed and installed farmers market banners for street posts downtown and lawn signs posted around the community. New Castle Farmers Market printed and installed new signage and ran a season-long newspaper advertisement promoting the market. Uniontown Farmers Market also developed new signage and promotional materials.

Just Harvest, a local community organization printed Fresh Access posters, highlighting markets that accept EBT/SNAP benefits.

The Western Pennsylvania Buy Fresh Buy Local® Chapter collaborated with the Greater Pittsburgh Regional Food Bank and Southwest PA Food Security Coalition to distribute flyers listing farmers markets which accept EBT/SNAP benefits, and advertising was placed on several Port Authority buses in the Pittsburgh metro-area within certain routes to reach our target audience groups, including inside panels with farmers market schedules.

All Pennsylvania Buy Fresh Buy Local partners received a toolkit package including recipes and rack cards to promote local farmers markets and the accessibility of healthy foods.

5.) State Level: Toolkit made available to all BFBL chapters and promoted statewide

Toolkit package including hard copies of signage, recipes cards, Point of Sale cards, and rack cards and a disc with all images and templates, was sent to the 13 Pennsylvania Buy Fresh Buy Local Chapter Leaders.

6.) Western PA Farmers Market Workshop Series & Webinars

PASA provided tools and training for market managers and vendors to improve their marketing strategies so that they can maintain a loyal customer base while still attracting new audiences.

Along with implementing various advertising initiatives to expand direct producer-to-consumer marketing, the project also included workshops for market managers and vendors to learn about tools and strategies to help grow and diversify the customer base of farmers markets in Pennsylvania and all across the country.

A day-long series of farmers market workshops, “Direct Marketing Tools and Strategies to Grow Your Customer Base” was held in Pittsburgh, PA on March 8, 2014, 10am - 4pm. This mini-conference was designed to help market managers, farmers and vendors learn strategies to attract and better serve a larger, more diverse audience. Projects from PASA’s Farmers Market Promotion Program Grant and template marketing materials were shared leading into informative sessions about reaching new audiences, collaborative marketing, and improving affordable marketing strategies including websites, social media, newsletters, and events. Attendees also had the chance to learn about a new program and get assistance to become SNAP-authorized and hear about how Pittsburgh farmers markets have started an EBT program and future plans to help more customers get access to fresh local food.

PASA and the Farmers Market Coalition partnered in the winter of 2013-2014 to hold a series of webinars designed to provide farmers market managers, vendors, and volunteers with information and guidance to understanding the characteristics of their customer base, learn how to build a brand worthy of community support, and stay competitive in a rapidly evolving local food scene.

Webinar 1: Understanding your Customer Demographics: Strategic Surveys to Make More Shoppers Core Shoppers on January 15, 2014, shared the findings revealed by an in-depth study of market shoppers conducted by Ontario’s Greenbelt Farmers’ Market Network. Presenters discussed some practical methods for researching customer perceptions, habits, and motivations in order to continuously improve services, spending, and satisfaction.

Webinar 2: Beyond the Brand: Marketing your Mission for Improved Fundraising and Community Support hosted on February 19, 2014, explained why and how to spend less energy promoting the market as just a great place to shop and more energy marketing the mission from Copper Alvarez, Executive Director, Big River Economic & Agricultural Development Alliance and Pam Knights, Pam Knights Consulting.

Webinar 3: Your Edge in a Changing Marketplace: Thinking like a Retailer on March 19, 2014 detailed how farmers markets are no longer the only option for shoppers seeking locally grown foods. Attendees learned about savvy retailer strategies to understand and promote their best assets and grow customer loyalty to keep them on the cutting edge of the changing local food landscape.

Recordings of these webinars are available on the [Farmers Market Coalition website](#) and via the [PASA YouTube channel](#).

Accomplishments

1.) **Three focus groups** were convened with a total of 20 participants, coordinated by PASA Staff and Social Impact Studios in Philadelphia, Pittsburgh and Harrisburg. Participants represented a diverse audience including local food shoppers and community service providers.

Social Impact Studios developed the following report based on focus group feedback:

Focus Group Themes:

- INFORMED CUSTOMERS

People have to *know* that fresh, locally grown food is available to them at their income level and the resources available to them to obtain it. Customers need to immediately know that they can use their food assistance (ACCESS, vouchers, etc.) to buy food from Buy Fresh Buy Local vendors.

- CONVENIENCE

Access to fresh, local food has to be convenient and fit into the busy and extended lives of potential customers. For working low-income folks, the location and hours are a factor. For seniors, transportation and direct access are a factor.

- REAL LIFE ECONOMICS

We live in *very* difficult economic times. Low-income people are having a harder time than ever. Moderate-income folks are now finding themselves scraping by at a lower-income level. We can't ignore the fact that money is tight and that "consumerism" is a bit of a luxury. Since fresh and local food may tend to be more expensive than processed, commodity-driven foods, the efforts need to speak to gut needs first (freshness, taste, etc.) and also connect the dots to bigger picture long-term *value*.

- APPLICABLE TO THEIR LIVES

Aside from cost and convenience, the next most challenging issue that people identified was the lack of experience tasting & *using* some fresh & local ingredients.

- People may not think they'll like the taste.
- People don't think they know how to prepare the ingredients.
- People have a reaction to the food not being prepared – "looks dirty," "looks wilted," etc.
- People think it takes too long to prepare.
- Different cultures value different ingredients and not all of them are going to be local even if they are fresh.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are in order of “ease-of-implementation.”

1. Be clear about food assistance availability

Add icons to the Buy Fresh Buy Local labels and signage that clearly show that food-assistance resources are accepted. Use the actual ACCESS logo, etc. Visual clues will help people take action.

2. Expand on the “Rally Cry”

When we first created and tested Buy Fresh Buy Local almost 10 years ago, consumers needed clear, directive instructions about the action being asked of them. Despite many different names and concepts that linked fresh, local food to local economy and farming, early focus groups all gravitated to the more simplified rally cry “Buy Fresh Buy Local.” They told us again and again, that they liked the direct messaging and it felt less complicated than the other complex reasons for taking that step.

Times have changed, though, and my instinct leads me to this 2nd recommendation for expanding the reach of Buy Fresh Buy Local. There are 2 main factors that play into this recommendation:

- Buy Fresh Buy Local is a recognizable brand at this point. The movement has succeeded in making the identity and rally cry pervasive. Everywhere we go, Buy Fresh Buy Local is one of the most recognizable brand campaigns around. People relate to its name, but also have a deep connection to the visuals.
- Consumerism is more difficult than ever for low to moderate-income people. People have moved beyond “stretching” a dollar to not buying many basic things at all. For people at a low to moderate-income level, economics is now a *survival* issue, more than a balancing act. I am concerned that the focus on “Buy... Buy” may be an immediate barrier to the real important part of our message, which is “Fresh...Local”

2. Expand the “Rally Cry” (cont.)

Based on the ideas from the focus group and what was most important, I think we should consider a variation on the Buy Fresh Buy Local identity that really emphasizes those 2 characteristics of fresh and local – while adding in other ideas that get to the crux of the matter:

“Eat Fresh Grown Local”

We would keep the current visual style and replace Buy Fresh Buy Local with that new rally cry for this add-on campaign and suite of materials.

2.) Three Rapid Market Assessments were conducted in Wilkinsburg, New Castle, and Uniontown Pennsylvania Farmers Markets. Written reports were submitted to farmers market managers. Based on these assessments, strategic marketing materials

were developed to more effectively promote the farmers markets to an expanded audience. This included newspaper advertising, signs, and banners:

- 200 Wilkinsburg market rack slips
- 200 New Castle market rack slips
- 200 Uniontown market rack slips
- 25 BFBL / market lawn signs - Wilkinsburg market
- New Castle market newspaper ads for the 2014 market season
- Additional market signage - Uniontown Farmers Market

As a result of the improved promotional campaigns, all three market managers reported in phone interviews conducted in the fall of 2014 that their markets had increased sales between 2012-2014 and increased customer traffic. In Uniontown, farmers' market vendor participation doubled, while New Castle and Wilkinsburg had good vendor retention, with all their vendors staying with the market over 2012-2014. In New Castle, the market manager reported that the increased customer traffic "was obvious, very visual change to the market; our market is really growing!"

3.) New marketing and informational materials developed:

- 100 chloroplast BFBL partner signs with cardboard easels
- 10,000 point of purchase cards
- 400 farmers market rack slips
- 1600 recipe cards
- 1600 FMNP recipe cards
- 1400 WIC & FMNP flyers & 200 posters
- 500 Spanish version Good Reasons to buy local at farmers markets poster
- 14 Buy Fresh Buy Local vinyl banners
- 40 posters listing Pittsburgh Farmers Markets which accept EBT
- 1000 Western PA Buy Fresh Buy Local® point of purchase cards
- 750 postcards listing Pittsburgh Farmers Markets which accept EBT
- 11,000 Buy Fresh Buy Local bumper stickers
- 12 posters listing Farmers Markets that accept EBT inside of City of Pittsburgh Port Authority buses (fall 2013 and summer 2014)
- 9 Buy Fresh Buy Local signs on the side of City of Pittsburgh Port Authority buses (fall 2013 and summer 2014)
- 600 Harvest for the Hungry event flyers (promoting donations of produce at markets to local food pantries)
- 144 Buy Fresh Buy Local Partner Window Cling stickers
- 100 Buy Fresh Buy Local Partner Vinyl Flags

4.) Integrated promotion in western Pennsylvania incorporating new messaging through the use of printed materials, new signage and advertising initiatives. This promotion was launched in collaboration with Buy Fresh Buy Local partner farmers markets including Wilkinsburg, New Castle, and Uniontown, as well as CitiParks Farmers Markets in Pittsburgh, in addition to community organizations including the Pittsburgh Food Policy Council, the Southwest Food Security Partnership, and the Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank. Through the distribution of promotional material focusing on the accessibility of farmers markets, new banners in low-income

communities, and bus advertisements, the project increased the visibility of regional farmers markets and awareness of EBT/SNAP accessibility at CitiParks Farmers Markets in Pittsburgh. 2013 was the first year for Pittsburgh City markets to accept EBT, and they totaled \$19,200 in EBT sales at 6 markets.

5.) Upgrade of buylocalpa.org website to WordPress to restore functionality of the site as a resource to local food providers, farmers markets and consumers.

6.) Farmers Market Workshops & Webinars: Originally we had planned a 3-class market workshop series in each of the 3 selected communities with 20 participants per series (3x 20 = 60 participants), and 50 online participants for the webinars. Due to staff and time constraints we ended up hosting a daylong mini-conference with 5 different presenters and 28 attendees participating. The webinars that we co-hosted with the Farmers Market Coalition resulted in over 200 attendees including market managers and farmers market vendors. Participants shared very positive reviews of both the in-person workshop and the webinars, with over 80% reporting that they learned strategies to improve their markets and expand their customer base.

Beneficiaries

- 1.) **Benefits to farmers:** Expanded promotion of farmers markets results in increased sales for farmers. All three target farmers markets- Wilksburg, Uniontown, and New Castle reported an increase in market sales and improved farmer-vendor retention at their markets between 2014. This is a farmer-centered project, which helped to increase sales for farmers at farmers markets by expanding and diversifying the customer base supporting those farmers, especially in low-income communities, where direct-marketing can be more challenging. The numbers of farmers that have benefitted include 15 farmers in our western PA targeted campaign in Uniontown, New Castle and Wilksburg.
- 2.) **Benefits to farmers markets:** In phone interviews, all three market managers of target markets expressed that their markets were experiencing growth and increased customer traffic as a result of increased promotional efforts. In addition, increased visibility of the farmers markets accepting EBT benefits created a successful roll out of Just Harvest's Fresh Access program, resulting in the expansion of markets accepting EBT benefits from 2 to 9 between 2013 and 2014.
- 3.) **Benefits to consumers, especially low-income residents:** The markets are all located in under-served, low-income communities. 30% of the population of Uniontown is below the poverty level, 23% in New Castle, and 20% in Wilksburg. These markets provide improved access to fresh, locally-grown, nutrient-dense foods for these communities. In addition, through support and collaboration with Just Harvest's Fresh Access program, the project benefited consumers by promoting opportunities to use debit/credit cards at Pittsburgh CitiParks markets, in addition to EBT benefits.

- 4.) **Benefits to BFBL chapters and partners:** In a 2012 survey, Buy Fresh Buy Local chapter leaders rated “marketing, advertising, and signage” as a top area they would like to improve, and funding as the biggest barrier. This project provided free marketing materials, and signage to chapter leaders to expand their Buy Fresh Buy Local toolkit for outreach to build a stronger local food system, and to connect more consumers with farmers and farmers markets across the state of Pennsylvania. In addition, this project restored functionality of the buylocalpa.org website, which having had 494,469 page views between 2013 and 2014, is an important outreach and promotion tool for both chapters and their farmers market partners. The work to support tools and resources for Buy Fresh Buy Local chapters and partners served to strengthen the identity associated with the Buy Fresh Buy Local branding through the cohesive promotional materials and improved website, and to increase the capacity of Buy Fresh Buy Local chapters to promote local foods.

Lessons Learned:

The strategy that worked best during the project was collaborating with other organizations to extend the reach and impact of our outreach. By working with social service agencies like food banks and food security coalitions and food policy councils, we were able to make stronger connections to low-income consumers who were interested in accessing healthy local foods. New opportunities arose to extend our work beyond our three target markets, and support the work of a local community organization in Pittsburgh working on EBT and food access issues at city-run farmers markets. With our additional support in promoting EBT access at those markets, in 2013, the first year for Pittsburgh City markets to accept EBT, they totaled \$19,200 in EBT sales at 6 markets. In early 2014, 80% of EBT shoppers at CitiParks Farmers Markets in Pittsburgh said their produce consumption had increased as a result of the acceptance of credit/debit/EBT cards. These were also great, unexpected results. The EBT project in Pittsburgh took off the same year as we received this funding for market promotion and so it was an unplanned, but beneficial partnership!

As a result of the funding from FMPP, we were able to revitalize three waning markets in high-need low-income food desert communities. By collaborating with three target farmers markets and working one-on-one with market managers to assess markets and develop new promotional strategies we worked to help retain vendors and increase and diversify the markets’ customer bases. As a result of the new promotional campaigns, all three market managers reported in phone interviews conducted in the fall of 2014 that their markets had increased sales between 2012-2014 and increased customer traffic. In Uniontown, farmers market vendor participation doubled, while New Castle and Wilksburg had good vendor retention, with all their vendors staying with the market over 2012-2014. In New Castle, the market manager reported that the increased customer traffic “was obvious, very visual change to the market; our market is really growing!”

Unanticipated Challenges:

Personnel Changes

Two PASA employees that were originally named on this proposal resigned from the organization in 2013, which slightly slowed progress, as PASA worked to reorganize staff responsibilities.

Since staff members named in the original grant proposal to manage the direct marketing workshops were no longer with the organization, we worked with outside presenters to help with the trainings and partnered with the Farmers Market Coalition in the place of Social Impact Studios for the webinar series of trainings.

Problems and Delays

Focus Groups

The focus groups were pushed back to accommodate an unanticipated workload increase for both the Project Manager and Western PA Project Coordinator that was the result of staffing changes at PASA. This slight change in schedule was discussed with Social Impact Studios and it was agreed that we would have time in the spring to wrap up the focus groups and begin work on the development of the toolkit in accordance with the rest of the project timeline.

Farmers Market Promotional Materials, Murals and Port Authority Advertising

Integrated promotion was planned to incorporate new advertising initiatives, including 3 market murals that would increase visibility of the campaign. The original spaces that were proposed in Lawrence and Fayette Counties ended up needing far more investment to improve the structural soundness of the exterior walls before a mural project could begin. In Pittsburgh, the building owner had to attend to personal family matters out of town, which prohibited us from gaining city approval in a timely manner.

PASA staff submitted a request to redistribute the funds previously planned for the murals and was granted permission that those funds be reallocated to the contractual/web developer category to help cover the cost of additional upgrades to the buylocalpa.org website which would increase access, services, and overall functionality. Upgrades to the buylocalpa.org website will enable PASA staff to provide better resources and the newly developed online toolkit to the 13 PA-BFBL chapter leaders and also to the 57 other BFBL chapters nationwide to improve their capacity to market to a more diverse audience in low-income communities.

Due to aforementioned delays in working with Social Impact Studios, advertisements planned for buses via the Allegheny County Port Authority ran for only the month of September in 2013. These ads then also appeared in June - August 2014.

Attachments

Attachment 1. Photos of ads used by the Allegheny County Port Authority, which will be installed on 10 buses in and around Pittsburgh, as well as banners to promote the Wilkinsburg Farmers' Market and will run June-August 2014. Posters and banners of the "Eat Local" image were also created for use by 13 Buy Fresh Buy Local Chapters in Pennsylvania.



Attachment 2. Example of new materials that have been developed – a template recipe card that can be customized by individual markets.

FARMER'S MARKET SMOOTHIE

INGREDIENTS
 1 banana, 7-9 inches long
 1 cup fat free, vanilla yogurt
 1/2 cup cherry tomatoes
 3-5 leaves swiss chard, without stem
 1 cup cantaloupe, or other melon
 4-5 cubes ice
 1 tbsp sugar
 3-4 basil leaves

INSTRUCTIONS
 Combine all ingredients in blender and puree until smooth. Make sure to put melon, ice, and yogurt in blender first, otherwise the ingredients will not have enough liquid to blend well. Makes about 3 cups.



BUY FRESH BUY LOCAL

Farmers Market Checks

ACCEPTED HERE

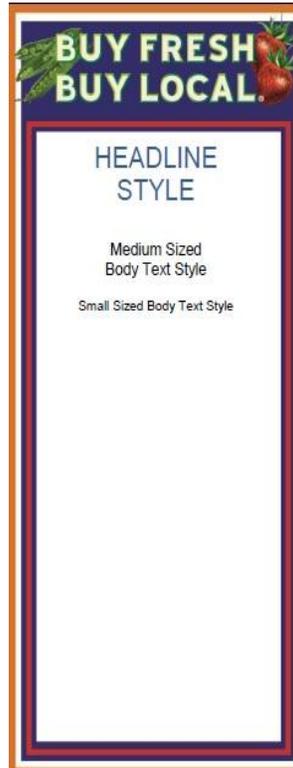
RECIPE NUTRITION PER SERVING:
 Calories: 130 From Fat: 0
 Vitamin A: 70%
 Vitamin C: 60%
 Calcium: 20%
 Iron: 4%

Attachment 3. Example of new materials that have been developed – a rack ad card that can also be customized by individual markets.

Front:



Back: can be customized with local market information



Attachment 4. Example of new materials that have been developed – a poster, in Spanish, explaining 10 reasons to buy fresh produce and shop at farmers markets.



Attachments 5-7. Rapid Market Assessment Reports

Attachment 5. New Castle

New Castle Farmers' Market Rapid Market Analysis New Castle, Beaver PA - #2 September 28, 2013

On 9/28/2013, the Western Pennsylvania Buy Fresh Buy Local team conducted a study of the New Castle Farmers' Saturday Market in New Castle, PA. We used a three-element process to gain a perspective about the vendors and customers within the farmers' market: customer counts, customer dot questions, and observations. The study team consisted of: Audrey Przybylski (NC Market Manager) and Fiona Fisher.

This report was prepared by: Fiona Fisher

Customer Counts

For the customer counts, and due to the number of people attending the Market, team members stationed themselves at the center of the foot traffic area. They counted adults entering the market for the middle 10 minutes of each hour, e.g. from 9:25-9:35. Each 10-minute count was multiplied by six to obtain an estimate of customers entering the market each hour.

Customer Dot Questions

The customer dot questions consisted of intercepting as many customers as possible, and asking them to place sticky “dots” on one large sheet of paper, which displayed six questions and various potential answers. This sheet was set up on a tripod in the heaviest traffic location at the market.

How often do you shop at this market?	1 to 2 times a week	1 to 2 times a month	Not often			
	6	5	6			
How much do you usually spend here?	Less than \$10	\$10 - \$20	\$25 - \$40	\$40+		
	2	9	4	3		
How did you travel to this market?	Car	Bus	Bike	Walk		
	16	0	0	0		
How did you hear about this market?	Word of mouth	Newspaper/Magazine	Social Media	Flyer		
	15	2	1	0		
Are you from New Castle?	Yes	If not, how many miles did you travel?				

	15	1 - 2 miles	2 - 5 miles	More than 5 miles		
			0	1	1	
Are you able to find everything you want in this market?	Yes	If not, what other options would like to see?				
	14	Vegetables	Fruit	Dairy/	Meat	Baked Goods
			0	1	1	1

Observations/Remarks

Set in downtown New Castle in very large, empty parking lot. (This was a Saturday morning market day.) There was a big difference between the Tuesday afternoon market and the Saturday market, which had more vendors and more customers. At least 8 vendors who stayed for the duration. Better displays/stalls – made more attractive with large display of potted *Chrysanthemums* on sale at two of the vendors' stalls. Greater variety of vegetables that included ground cherries and fingerling potatoes. Because of the greater number of vendors, the huge parking lot looked a lot less empty than the weekday afternoon market. Vendors friendly and eager to educate customers. Fairly easy to find but lacks signage/directional signage. Perhaps opportunities for musical entertainment to attract drive-bys. Social Media reaches some customers - first of markets analyzed to have direct Market Manager social media impact. Ads in local newspaper also noted. Perhaps opportunity for radio spots and/or local radio broadcast from market site (probably on a Saturday). Still room for additional vendors/different kind of vendors (crafts, baked goods, artisan cheeses, etc.) Currently, vendors are lined up along edge of parking lot closest to the road – which makes sense re: visibility. Perhaps with more vendors different stall arrangement is possible – say in a market square set-up with premium roadside spots rotated on a weekly basis for fairness.

Still room for educational value for market customers re: fresh, local, nutrition and support of local economy.

The goal of this project is to broaden and diversify the customer base of farmers markets in Pennsylvania by expanding the messaging and resources of the PA BFBL

program to attract additional population segments to shop at farmers markets, especially low-income women with children, low-income seniors and minorities. PASA will foster an expanded statewide BFBL marketing campaign by developing broader BFBL messaging, toolkits and trainings for BFBL chapters, by modeling and evaluating an integrated marketing and educational support program to build the capacity of farmers markets in western PA, and by sharing best practices and results through the PA BFBL network and the national FoodRoutes network.

Photo of Fiona Fisher conducting the RMA at the New Castle Farmers Market.



Attachment 6. Uniontown

Uniontown Farmers Market Rapid Market Analysis Uniontown, Westmoreland PA September 9, 2013

On 9/9/2013, the Western Pennsylvania Buy Fresh Buy Local team conducted a study of the Uniontown/Fayette County Farmers Market in Uniontown, PA. We used a three-element process to gain a perspective about the vendors and customers within the farmers' market: customer counts, customer dot questions, and observations. The study team consisted of: Alissa Matthews and Fiona Fisher.

This report was prepared by: Fiona Fisher

Customer Counts

For the customer counts, and due to the number of people attending the Market, team members stationed themselves at the center of the foot traffic area. They counted adults entering the market for the middle 10 minutes of each hour, e.g. from 9:25-9:35. Each 10-minute count was multiplied by six to obtain an estimate of customers entering the market each hour.

Customer Dot Questions

The customer dot questions consisted of intercepting as many customers as possible, and asking them to place sticky "dots" on one large sheet of paper, which displayed six questions and various potential answers. This sheet was set up on a tripod in the heaviest traffic location at the market.

How often do you shop at this market?	1 to 2 times a week	1 to 2 times a month	Not often						
	9	3	11						
How much do you usually spend here?	Less than \$10	\$10 - \$20	\$25 - \$40	\$40+					

	8	14	1	0				
How did you travel to this market?	Car	Bus	Bike	Walk				
	18	0	0	5				
How did you hear about this market?	Word of mouth	Newspaper/Magazine	Social Media	Flyer	Radio			
	6	10	0	4	3			
Are you from Uniontown?	Yes	If not, how many miles did you travel?						
	9	1 - 2 miles	2 - 5 miles	More than 5 miles				
		1	5	6				
Are you able to find everything you want in this market?	Yes	If not, what other options would like to see?						
	17	Vegetables	Fruit	Dairy	Meat	Baked Goods	Information	Jewelry/Crafts
		1	0	2	3	3	0	2

Observations/Remarks

Set in downtown Uniontown, nice tent arrangement on first come first served for vendors and potted plants located around the site made an attractive setting. Space for larger number of vendors. Total vendors that day: 5 or 6; local radio station broadcasting from market with prizes given away. Monday evening Market coincides with musical entertainment in adjacent public setting. Opportunity seemed to be missed to capitalize on large number of music-goers even though there are radio and newspaper ads. Music goers were mostly older (50+). Perhaps think about special offers from vendors ... e.g. buy one bag of produce and get half-off second bag? Also consider combining musical and farmers market ad. Overall, nice market. Interesting that no one questioned volunteered social media as source of farmers' market info.

The goal of this project is to broaden and diversify the customer base of farmers markets in Pennsylvania by expanding the messaging and resources of the PA BFBL program to attract additional population segments to shop at farmers markets, especially low-income women with children, low-income seniors and minorities. PASA will foster an expanded statewide BFBL marketing campaign by developing broader BFBL messaging, toolkits and trainings for BFBL chapters, by modeling and evaluating an integrated marketing and educational support program to build the capacity of farmers markets in western PA, and by sharing best practices and results through the PA BFBL network and the national FoodRoutes network.

Attachment 7. Wilkinsburg

**Wilkinsburg Farmers Market
Rapid Market Analysis
Wilkinsburg/Pittsburgh, PA
August 27, 2013**

On 8/27/2013, the Western Pennsylvania Buy Fresh Buy Local team conducted a study of the Wilkinsburg Farmers Market in Pittsburgh, PA. We used a three-element process to gain a perspective about the vendors and customers within the farmers' market: customer counts, customer dot questions, and observations. The study team consisted of: Alissa Matthews and Fiona Fisher.

This report was prepared by: Fiona Fisher

Customer Counts

For the customer counts, and due to the number of people attending the Market, team members stationed themselves at the center of the foot traffic area. They counted adults entering the market for the middle 10 minutes of each hour, e.g. from 9:25-9:35. Each 10-minute count was multiplied by six to obtain an estimate of customers entering the market each hour.

Customer Dot Questions

The customer dot questions consisted of intercepting as many customers as possible, and asking them to place sticky “dots” on one large sheet of paper, which displayed six questions and various potential answers. This sheet was set up on a tripod in the heaviest traffic location at the market.

How often do you shop at this market?	1 to 2 times a week	1 to 2 times a month	Not often					
	12	7	7					
How much do you usually spend here?	Less than \$10	\$10 - \$20	\$25 - \$40	\$40+				
	11	13	2	0				
How did you travel to this market?	Car	Bus	Bike	Walk				
	20	1	0	5				
How often do you shop at this market?	1 to 2 times a week	1 to 2 times a month	Not often					
	21	5	0	0				
Are you from Wilkinsburg?	Yes	If not, how many miles did you travel?						
	10	1 - 2 miles	2 - 5 miles	More than 5				

				miles			
		11	4	1			
Are you able to find everything you want in this market?	Yes	If not, what other options would like to see?					
	14	Vegetables	Fruit	Dairy	Meat	Baked Goods	Information
		1	1	2	5	6	0

Observations/Remarks

Long established market; local church giving out/selling hot dogs while we were there. 4 or 5 vendors. Patrons remember a time when there were many more vendors with greater variety of food choices (baked goods was frequently mentioned as the thing customers missed most). Location has bus stop and far fewer vendors than space. Customers mix of older (50+) residents and younger buyers - older customers probably about 60-70%. (Perhaps this number was skewed because of church outreach efforts on market day.) Opportunity for better signage. It will be interesting to see how the bus ads affect market traffic.

The goal of this project is to broaden and diversify the customer base of farmers markets in Pennsylvania by expanding the messaging and resources of the PA BFBL program to attract additional population segments to shop at farmers markets, especially low-income women with children, low-income seniors and minorities. PASA will foster an expanded statewide BFBL marketing campaign by developing broader BFBL messaging, toolkits and trainings for BFBL chapters, by modeling and evaluating an integrated marketing and educational support program to build the capacity of farmers markets in western PA, and by sharing best practices and results through the PA BFBL network and the national FoodRoutes network.