



**Final Performance Report  
Specialty Crop Block Grant Program  
Kansas Department of Agriculture  
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# Postage Stamp Produce Production Project

Community Foundation of Northeast Kansas/Brown County Healthy Foods Coalition  
Grant Awarded: \$53,814

## FINAL REPORT

### Project Summary

The Postage Stamp Produce Production Project was initiated by a group of individuals identified as the Brown County Healthy Foods Coalition. Their mission is to improve access to healthy foods for local citizens and improve the overall health of the community. While recognizing the success of production agriculture in the county, it was noted that in 2011 through the University of Wisconsin County Health Rankings Assessment, which measures data related to health behaviors, physical environment, socioeconomic factors and access to health care, the county ranked 84 overall out of the 105 Kansas Counties? It was determined that 31% of adult population was obese with 10% of the population experiencing diabetes. An estimated 29% of the population was identified as having access to healthy foods. According to data from the Food Environmental Atlas in 2009, the childhood obesity rate for low-income preschool children in the county was 18.1 - 36.8%. Through additional research and more than 15 focus group sessions throughout the county the group identified opportunities for more local specialty crop production and distribution as a process to address healthy living issues.

### Project Approach

The Community Change Framework, outlined below, explains the activities design for accomplishing selected goals of the project. It is the responsibility of the leadership team to develop activities that will further mobilize, educate and engage organizational decision makers and local policymakers to create environments that support change:



#### Community Education:

Design activities that educate the public (or subsets of the public) and the media about identified issues with the intention of influencing individual opinions, beliefs and behaviors. Community education includes specific events, earned media and other types of information dissemination.

#### Community Mobilization:

Select activities to create a broad constituency that is committed to: ensuring public support for the promotion of specific activities; helping mobilize the community to voice its support for the policies and programs developed.

#### Advocacy with Organizational Decision Makers:

These are activities designed to change or develop organizations' policies by creating environments that make the good choice the easy choice. Advocacy is to be focused on interventions with the goal of organizations adopting and implementing supporting positions. The targets for activities in this component are non-governmental decision makers able to set policies for businesses, churches, health systems, urban planning/development companies and other organizations.

#### Government Policy-maker Education:

These activities are selected to educating local policy-makers about the impact of the project priorities chosen. Successful government policy-maker education can help establish strong legislative champions and ensure that elected officials make informed decisions when called upon.

Leadership team champions involved with the PSPP project were engaged in the training for this type of community change initiative. They are also provided with on-going technical assistance for accomplishing the goals of improving access to specialty crop produce and quality foods.

### **Goals and Outcomes Achieved**

#### Identified Goals were:

1. Identification of 20-30 active and prospective specialty crop producers interested in expanding specialty crop production.
2. Organize specialty crop producers to establish a system for specialty crop production and distribution.
3. Work with community leaders to develop a community land bank and foundation to increase production sites available to active and prospective specialty crop producers.
4. Coordinate information workshops and seminars for both specialty crop producers and consumers from across the county.

#### Goal 1:

Increasing numbers of identified specialty crop producers was accomplished by registering more than 30 producers that participated in the project-designed and supported Hiawatha Thriftway Farmers Market. The owners of the local Thriftway Grocery Store lead by manager Tim White agreed to provide their facilities as a designated location for the farmers market. Information provided by the Kansas State University Graduate School of Business provided support for store owners to host the market as a part of their strategic plan. The weekly market became a focal point for the community and proved mutually beneficial for the store. As traffic to the location improved business volume improved for the store. This project component provided stability for the 30 plus workers at the store as well as an improved market for the producers. It should also be noted that kale became a priority produce that was introduced and consumed in large quantities from the farmers market experience.

Status: 100% Success

The Hiawatha Thriftway Farmers Market has become a sustainable business with the store manager assigning the produce department manager duties of Farmer's Market manager at paid time for organization and management. Additional store employees will provide support for the market set up and produce handling. Training was provided on site for Brown County Developmental Services workers to assist with these activities.

Additional farmer's markets are being planned in Horton, the Kickapoo Tribe in Kansas, and the Iowa Tribe locations. Meetings have already been conducted for 2014 process and procedures at the Hiawatha Thriftway Farmer's Market. Arrangements have been made to cover EBT and SNAP programs. Producers are signing up for reserved market spaces and a new fee structure has been negotiated with the market and producers. Advertising has already begun for the market sessions that begin in May 2014. Consumer surveys were used to determine product focus for this session as well as food hub production.

Goal 2:

Organizing a producer's network was selected as a way to establish sustainable access for both producers and consumers to specialty crops locally. While conducting growers conferences and educational meetings it was quickly acknowledged by the project team that while current specialty producers were willing to meet and discuss options for responding to consumer requests for healthy produce, there was little support to formalize a cooperative organization so early in the process. However community gardens were currently being supported by the Kickapoo and Iowa tribes. They were seeking ways to expand their production. The HCC Klinefelter Farm was also interested in developing and expanding their role in supporting gardening in the local community. By sharing information community gardens were also expanded in both Hiawatha and Horton. The initial PSPP field manager was instrumental in assisting with these gardens and spent contact time in consultation and support for these endeavors. Produce from these gardens was shared with senior citizens programs and meals on wheels programs in the county. Some of the produce was included in the Hiawatha Thriftway Farmer's Market with proceeds from direct sales returned to the site for use of development of the program. In an effort to further opportunities for the local producers a group was formed to investigate the potential for a food hub. Thriftway owners examined the potential of their location and began remodeling a portion of their physical plant to accommodate the criteria for a food hub location. The Thriftway store's produce department also adopted the policy of negotiating purchase of items from the farmer's market producers. Local producers were featured as a component of the stores marketing program.

An important factor discovered while working on garden development was the number of people lacking initial capital to begin a garden. The cost of seeds, plants, fertilizer, preparation, etc. was identified by unusual voices as barriers for having a garden. Also many of these people rent properties and did not feel it was appropriate to build gardens on rental property. One solution for this situation was to develop a no interest revolving loan fund to assist these individuals to participate at the community garden sites. This process will also be evaluated by the BCHFC for the 2014 season to determine programs for the future.

Status: 50% Success

Although the local Thriftway site can be operational as a food hub within a few days, it is recognized that to be considered sustainable for the long term a distribution and communication network remain to be developed and designated. Locally the food hub basic equipment is in place including handling equipment, washing bay, and walk-in cooling unit. This equipment was purchased by Thriftway and installed in anticipation of the activation of the network. The Thriftway site is being included in the \$70,000 Northeast Kansas Food Hub feasibility study with a term, "Sub-Hub" designation, as a part of the network design by both the Kansas City and Douglas County Hub Networks currently seeking hub status.

The number of community gardens is anticipated to increase for 2014 by a minimum of two with the potential of 20 new gardeners. 15 individuals have signed garden applications for plots and approximately \$7,000 has been pledged to prepare and set up individually assigned plots, at two, virgin, garden locations. Gardens involved in the project in 2013 are anticipating expansion due to their popularity during the growing season. Policies, rules, and guidelines for these various gardens will provide the BCHFC the opportunity to evaluate organization and operational designs for forming a North East Kansas Community Garden Network. The Community Foundation of North East Kansas serves as the legal entity to manage properties (management, insurance, accounting, etc.) for the NEK-CGN. In 2014 the Postage Stamp Produce Production plot selection process can be evaluated by examining these various locations and determining the priority types of application for utilization by the community land bank program. This practical experience will be valuable as policies are developed for community land bank management.

#### Goal 3:

This goal focused on creating a community land bank and establishing a 501 (c) (3) foundation to directly address sustainability for local specialty crop production and healthy communities. Establishing postage stamp plots to provide sufficient production for specialty crops and spaces for community gardens is the major emphasis of Community Foundation of North East Kansas' activities relating to development of a community land bank. A searchable data base of vacant and derelict properties using county appraiser's software and Google Earth with design modifications was completed for the PSPP Project. The database will provide critical information regarding properties eligible for acquisition by the Community Land Bank for specialty crop gardening. Project time for this initial phase of the project was provided by the City of Hiawatha via the Hiawatha Foundation for Economic Development funding. The amount of cash provided in addition to PSPP Project funds for personnel employed by HFED amounted to \$2,212.05. A strategic selection process identified 16 Contacts and Community Champions to support development of the component policies and management design through the Community Land Bank Planning Group. Legal advisors have been assigned to assist in the development of identified policies and procedures applicable for a Kansas Community Land Bank Organization. As the PSPP Project researched the policies and guidelines necessary for development of a community land bank, it became apparent that the resources and timeline included in the PSPP project would not culminate in the formation of the land bank program. However, through a series of more than 15 community meetings; it also became apparent that this component of the PSPP project was a priority in the community. As a result a successful application to the Kansas Health Foundation – Healthy Community Initiative was made for assistance. The newly formed Community Foundation of Northeast Kansas was awarded a grant in the amount of \$74,250 for three years beginning July 1, 2013. A copy of the award letter is attached to this report as Appendix A.

Status: 30% Success

This estimate of success is based on the timeline developed for formation of the policies and community land bank board as three years. However, the success factor is potentially much higher due to resources combined in 2013 to establish a firm foundation for the activities remaining to be implemented. Not only has the financial commitment been established, but also the cadre of expertise is in place to support the local champions in continuing this endeavor.

#### Goal 4:

Conferences and educational programs were provided for both producers and consumers. The educational programs covered a wide range of topics relating to specialty crops. Initially the focus was on formalizing farmers markets and producer participation, “Organizing a Specialty Crop Producers Cooperative and Food Hub Cooperative Conference” to “Growing Food, Farms, and Communities”, as well as, “BEE AWARE – Beneficial Pollinators” and “The Community Land Bank – A Vehicle for Extending

Production Capability of Specialty Crops”. An 11 member planning group was involved in conference designs that were active PSPP Project participants. A summary list of workshops and conferences follows:

- 1) Specialty Crop Cooperative and Food Hub Cooperative Conference
- 2) Farmers Market Competitive Position Market Research Report Presentation
- 3) Wyandotte County Community Land Bank Organization – Community Information
- 4) BCHF Team for Northeast Kansas Food Hub Convening – Douglas County
- 5) Food Hub On-Site Interviews with New Venture Advisors LLC – Chicago
- 6) BEE AWARE – Importance of Attracting Pollinators – Conference
- 7) Weekly WIC Food Use & Preparation Demonstrations – Karla Harter, NEK Multi-County Health
- 8) Local Food Production – Specialty Crops Community Gardening – Katherine Kelly
- 9) 2014 Farmers Market Producers Planning Conference
- 10) Three Community Land Bank Trial Focus Groups – Planning & Design

Status: 100% Success

320 participants in these workshops and conferences have resulted in:

- 6 beekeepers
- 15 specialty crop gardeners
- 30 farmers market producer participants
- 34 Project Management Volunteers
- 3 Farmer’s Markets for Brown County
- 2 new community gardens
- 1 “Sub-Hub” Food Hub.

## **Beneficiaries**

Briefly, the KDA – PSPP Grant has provided Brown County and the Northeast Kansas Area a major boost by advancing specialty crop production and marketing via local farmer’s markets. Project activities have improved local collaborative efforts and expanded awareness regarding local access to healthy food and healthy life styles. At the beginning of this report we noted the 2011 University of Wisconsin County Health Rankings Assessment, when the county ranked 84 overall out of the 105 Kansas Counties. In 2013 the Brown County Health Outcome ranking was 88 and Brown County Health Factors ranking was 96. The recent announcement for Year 2014 ranks Brown County Health Outcome for the State Of Kansas is now 76 and Health Factors Ranking as 82. Improvements of 12 and 14 points are significant. Although; still needing much improvement, engaging the community in production of healthy specialty crops has also had a role to play in this effort.

## **Lessons Learned**

Below is a summary of lesson learned along the way with this project:

Sharing information and gathering points of view from the community is very beneficial.

It is important to put the necessary time and effort into setting up the policies needed for a sound organizational structure.

The concept of a land bank has been very good, but took more time to establish than was initially expected.

## **Project Contact Information**

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# Get Growing Kansas City

## Cultivate Kansas City

Grant Awarded: \$9,000

### FINAL REPORT

#### Project Summary

In 2011, Cultivate Kansas City launched Get Growing Kansas City, a collaborative project with Lincoln University's Innovative Small Farmers' Outreach Program and Kansas City Community Gardens. This project increases urban farms, community and school gardens, and home gardens in food deserts by: Helping people learn how to grow food and share their knowledge increasing awareness and demand for locally grown vegetables;

Increasing urban farms, community gardens, school gardens, and home gardens, increasing production of specialty crops;

Increasing skill level of growers, which increases the quality and competitiveness of specialty crops;

Establishing long-term relationships between community-based organizations, community leaders and farming and gardening organizations, insuring long-term competitiveness and sustainability of local vegetable production; and

Establishing advocacy networks for fresh food, increasing competitiveness, improved distribution, and increased quality of locally grown specialty crops, including vegetables, flowers, herbs and fruits.

#### Project Approach

The Get Growing KC team has the goal of targeting communities with little access to locally grown vegetables. In Kansas, the project team identified three areas to focus efforts including postal zip code areas: 66102, 66104 and 66105. This project had the approach of:

Increasing child and adult knowledge and consumption of specialty crops through a media campaign, personal phone calls, letters and emails, one-on-one meetings, public presentations, hand-outs, and web-based information;

Developing urban agricultural economies by increasing the number of successful food enterprises in Kansas;

Improving food access in underserved communities by increasing urban farms and gardens growing and selling food in those communities;

Improving efficiency of distribution systems by creating more outlets for the sale of vegetables;

Enhancing food safety with workshops on proper harvest and post-harvest handling;

Supporting urban farmers as they explore and develop new and improved specialty crops;

Improving pest and disease control through trainings, workshops and technical assistance to farmers and gardeners; and

Development of organic and sustainable production practices through workshops and technical assistance to farmers and gardeners.

#### Goals and Outcomes Achieved

Goal 1: Educate the public about the importance and benefits of growing local food

*During February, March, and April the team will place radio spots on Magic 107.3 (Soul, R&B), KPRS (Gospel), 1250 AM KKHK - "Super X," and 1480 AM KCZZ - "La Zeta." They will also seek to get PSAs*

and news stories on local radio stations informing the public of the importance of urban agriculture, eating locally grown and the support available from Get Growing KC. They will run print advertising in *The Call*, *The Globe*, *Dos Mundos*, and *Hispanic News*, as well as seeking stories to promote gardening and urban farming.

Because of budgetary constraints, we did not do paid advertising. We also found that we didn't have the staff capacity to deal with the volume of requests for TA and workshops, so we made a strategic decision not to invest limited funds in advertising.

At the same time, we got a lot of free media coverage tied to the Get Growing team, the farms we work with, urban agriculture, and the benefits of locally grown fresh fruits and vegetables through a variety of public events we organized. Some of the coverage included Get Growing KC staff, some included the farms and food projects we worked on, some were more generally focused on "urban agriculture" and "local food":

Date	Media Source	Content	Find at
9/4/2012	KSHB 41	Study Minimizing Health Benefits of Organic Food Gets Mixed Reaction	<a href="http://www.kshb.com/dpp/news/health/a-study-minimizing-health-benefits-of-organic-foods-gets-mixed-reaction">http://www.kshb.com/dpp/news/health/a-study-minimizing-health-benefits-of-organic-foods-gets-mixed-reaction</a>
9/10/2012	KCTV5	Better Kansas City - Alicia "How to Pick the Best Veggies"	
10/4/2012	BNIM Blog	Better Block KC-First Friday Event, October 5 <sup>th</sup>	<a href="http://www.bnim.com/blog-entry/better-block-kc-%E2%80%93-first-friday-event-october-5">http://www.bnim.com/blog-entry/better-block-kc-%E2%80%93-first-friday-event-october-5</a>
10/12/2012	Young Farmers Coalition Blog	Bootstrap @the Salad Garden- Stretching the Seasons	<a href="http://www.youngfarmers.org/blog/2012/10/12/bootstrap-the-salad-garden-stretching-the-seasons/">http://www.youngfarmers.org/blog/2012/10/12/bootstrap-the-salad-garden-stretching-the-seasons/</a>
10/23/2012	Health Care Foundation Greater Kansas City	Kansas City takes part in national Food Day	<a href="http://hcfkcc.org/news/kansas-city-take-part-national-food-day">http://hcfkcc.org/news/kansas-city-take-part-national-food-day</a>
10/23/2012	KCUR Morning Edition	Food Day - Expanding food access, one market, one plot at a time	<a href="http://www.kcur.org/term/food-day">http://www.kcur.org/term/food-day</a>
1/15/13	Travois Blog	Cultivate Kansas City	<a href="http://www.travois.com/blog/index.php/2013/01/15/cultivate-kc/">http://www.travois.com/blog/index.php/2013/01/15/cultivate-kc/</a>
1/15/13	"Dreamcatcher" by Travois	Cultivate KC	<a href="http://www.travois.com/blog">www.travois.com/blog</a>
1/22/2013	SeedStock	Kansas City Urban Ag Org. Supports City Farmers While Growing Healthy Communities	<a href="http://www.facebook.com/events/332956913470782/?notif t=plan user joined">http://www.facebook.com/events/332956913470782/?notif t=plan user joined</a>
1/28/2013	Midtown KC Post	Support for urban farming keeps growing in KC	<a href="http://midtownkcpost.com/2013/01/28/support-for-urban-farming-keeps-growing-in-kc-4777">http://midtownkcpost.com/2013/01/28/support-for-urban-farming-keeps-growing-in-kc-4777</a>
2/15/13	VisitKC Guide	Urban Farms and Gardens Tour in Datebook	
3/15/13	Miami County Republic	Starting your first garden adds excitement to spring	
3/28/13	Kansas City Star	Growing the Growers	
4/15/13	Edible Kansas City	Cultivate the Change!	<a href="http://digitaleditions.sheridan.com/publication/?i=152993">http://digitaleditions.sheridan.com/publication/?i=152993</a>
5/1/13	Kansas City	Join the Urban Grown	

Date	Media Source	Content	Find at
	Gardener	Revolution!	
5/21/13	Kansas City Star	Lessons in Life Grow on Urban Farm	<a href="http://www.kansascity.com/2013/05/21/4237551/lessons-in-life-grow-on-urban.html">http://www.kansascity.com/2013/05/21/4237551/lessons-in-life-grow-on-urban.html</a>
6/1/13	Kansas City Gardener	Urban Grown Farms & Gardens Tour: Gather tips for your own food garden	
6/8/13	The Wichita Eagle	Gardener's Almanac (June 8)	<a href="http://www.kansas.com/2013/06/08/2832191/gardeners-almanac-june-8.html">http://www.kansas.com/2013/06/08/2832191/gardeners-almanac-june-8.html</a>
6/9/13	The KC Star Magazine	Planting Urban Change	<a href="#">see pdfs</a>
6/9/13	Planned Resilience	Cultivate KC Urban Farms & Gardens Tour Coming Up Soon	<a href="http://plannedresilience.net/cultivate-kc-urban-farms-gaqrden-s-tour-coming-up-soon/">http://plannedresilience.net/cultivate-kc-urban-farms-gaqrden-s-tour-coming-up-soon/</a>
6/11/13	Kansas City Star - 913	Yards Gone Wild are Producing Wholesome Food	<a href="http://www.kansascity.com/2013/06/11/4287648/it-takes-a-village-to-make-a-forest.html">http://www.kansascity.com/2013/06/11/4287648/it-takes-a-village-to-make-a-forest.html</a>
6/11/13	The Pitch	New Roots for Refugees cultivates hope in a corner of the metro	<a href="http://www.pitch.com/kansascity/new-roots-for-refugees-juniper-gardens/Content?oid=3248557">http://www.pitch.com/kansascity/new-roots-for-refugees-juniper-gardens/Content?oid=3248557</a>
6/12/13	Greenability Magazine	Gear up for the 2013 Urban Grown Tour	<a href="#">PDF</a>
6/12/13	Fox 4 News	Cooking with Lisa	
6/12/13	Fox 4 News	Noon news - Urban farming helps kids, helps the community	<a href="http://fox4kc.com/2013/06/12/urban-farming-helps-kids-helps-the-community/">http://fox4kc.com/2013/06/12/urban-farming-helps-kids-helps-the-community/</a>
6/14/13	Kansas City Star - Chow Town	Starting Saturday: A weeklong Celebration of local food and farms	<a href="http://www.kansascity.com/2013/06/14/4292747/starting-saturday-a-weeklong-celebration.html">http://www.kansascity.com/2013/06/14/4292747/starting-saturday-a-weeklong-celebration.html</a>
6/17/13	NBC Action News	Cultivate KC kicks off urban farm and garden tour	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N8MNZMA2lOo">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N8MNZMA2lOo</a>
6/17/13	The Pitch Blogs	Urban Grown Farms & Gardens Tour kicks off at the library tonight	<a href="http://www.pitch.com/FastPitch/archives/2013/06/17/urban-grown-farms-and-gardens-tour-kicks-off-at-the-library-tonight">http://www.pitch.com/FastPitch/archives/2013/06/17/urban-grown-farms-and-gardens-tour-kicks-off-at-the-library-tonight</a>
6/19/13	Kansas City Star - Chow Town	Learn about items grown locally at this week's Urban farms, gardens tour	<a href="http://www.kansascity.com/2013/06/19/4301987/learn-about-items-grown-locally.html">http://www.kansascity.com/2013/06/19/4301987/learn-about-items-grown-locally.html</a>
6/19/13	The Pitch	Can't Decide Which Urban Farms to Hit? Start Here	<a href="http://www.pitch.com/FastPitch/archives/2013/06/19/cant-decide-which-urban-farms-to-hit-start-here">http://www.pitch.com/FastPitch/archives/2013/06/19/cant-decide-which-urban-farms-to-hit-start-here</a>
6/19/13	The Miami County Republic	Urban Garden Tour Highlights Unique Idea	<a href="http://www.republic-online.com/republic-online/article_d5b58653-608a-5923-9e33-3132faff13ec.html">http://www.republic-online.com/republic-online/article_d5b58653-608a-5923-9e33-3132faff13ec.html</a>
6/21/13	Living Closer to Home	KC Urban Grown Farms & Gardens Tour 2013	<a href="http://www.livingcloserhome.org/kc-urban-grown-farms-gardens-tour-2013/">http://www.livingcloserhome.org/kc-urban-grown-farms-gardens-tour-2013/</a>
6/21/13	Kansas City Live	Urban garden helps people cultivate green thumb and a business mind	<a href="http://www.kshb.com/dpp/entertainment/kcl/lifestyle_kcl/urban-garden-helps-people-cultivate-green-thumb-and-a-business-mind">http://www.kshb.com/dpp/entertainment/kcl/lifestyle_kcl/urban-garden-helps-people-cultivate-green-thumb-and-a-business-mind</a>
6/22/13	Kansas City Star - Chow Town	Don't forget about urban farm, garden tours this weekend	<a href="http://www.kansascity.com/2013/06/22/4307222/dont-forget-about-urban-farm-garden.html">http://www.kansascity.com/2013/06/22/4307222/dont-forget-about-urban-farm-garden.html</a>

Date	Media Source	Content	Find at
6/22/13	mom2mom	Urban Farms tour is this Weekend	<a href="http://www.mom2momkc.com/forum/viewtopic.php?f=4&amp;p=195460&amp;sid=">http://www.mom2momkc.com/forum/viewtopic.php?f=4&amp;p=195460&amp;sid=</a>
6/29/13	Youtube	Gibbs Road Farm Urban Farms & Gardens Tour Saturday, June 22, 2013 w/ The Good Sam Club Band	<a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rqzicss9u5Y">http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rqzicss9u5Y</a>
7/1/13	The Pitch	Urban Grown Farms & Gardens Tour slideshow	<a href="http://www.pitch.com/kansascity/urban-grown-farms-and-gardens-tour/Slideshow?oid=3261616&amp;slide=24&amp;autoplay=true">http://www.pitch.com/kansascity/urban-grown-farms-and-gardens-tour/Slideshow?oid=3261616&amp;slide=24&amp;autoplay=true</a>
7/1/13	EcoRadio KC	Urban Farms and Gardens Tour Redux	<a href="http://www.kkfi.org/program-episodes/urban-farms-and-gardens-tour-redux/">http://www.kkfi.org/program-episodes/urban-farms-and-gardens-tour-redux/</a>
7/21/13	The Kansas City Star	KC and KCK win competitive environmental cleanup grant	<a href="http://www.kansascity.com/2013/07/21/4358811/kc-and-kck-win-competitive-environmental.html">http://www.kansascity.com/2013/07/21/4358811/kc-and-kck-win-competitive-environmental.html</a>
7/22/13	Kansas Health Institute	Pilot project to pay for community garden water lines	<a href="http://www.khi.org/news/2013/jul/22/pilot-project-pay-community-garden-water-lines/">http://www.khi.org/news/2013/jul/22/pilot-project-pay-community-garden-water-lines/</a>
8/1/13	Edible Kansas City	Farm-to-Table: Growing more than just good food	<a href="http://ediblekansascity.com/back-of-house-farm-to-table-growing-more-than-just-good-food/">http://ediblekansascity.com/back-of-house-farm-to-table-growing-more-than-just-good-food/</a>
9/2/13	Fox 4 News	Refugees introduce new foods in neighborhood gardens, helping to feed the poor	<a href="http://fox4kc.com/2013/09/02/refugees-introduce-new-foods-in-neighborhood-gardens-helping-to-feed-the-poor/">http://fox4kc.com/2013/09/02/refugees-introduce-new-foods-in-neighborhood-gardens-helping-to-feed-the-poor/</a>
9/9/13	KC Live	Broadmoor Bistro dishes up a non-traditional crème brulee	<a href="http://www.kshb.com/dpp/entertainment/kcl/food_kcl/broadmoor-bistro-dishes-up-a-non-traditional-creme-brulee">http://www.kshb.com/dpp/entertainment/kcl/food_kcl/broadmoor-bistro-dishes-up-a-non-traditional-creme-brulee</a>
9/10/13	KC Live	Broadmoor Bistro dishes up Garden Melon Corn and Basil Gazpacho	<a href="http://www.kshb.com/dpp/entertainment/kcl/food_kcl/Broadmoor-Bistro-dishes-up-Garden-Melon-Corn-and-Basil-Gazpacho">http://www.kshb.com/dpp/entertainment/kcl/food_kcl/Broadmoor-Bistro-dishes-up-Garden-Melon-Corn-and-Basil-Gazpacho</a>
9/13/13	Kansas City Star	Kansas City harvests bumper crop of gardens	<a href="http://www.kansascity.com/2013/09/13/4479722/kansas-city-harvests-a-bumper.html">http://www.kansascity.com/2013/09/13/4479722/kansas-city-harvests-a-bumper.html</a>
9/16/13	Business Channel	Interview with Allison and Alicia	
9/16/13	KMBZ	Vignette style interviews with Allison and Alicia, aired all week	
9/25/13	KCTV5	Push to get healthy food in food deserts	<a href="http://www.kctv5.com/video?clipId=9282741&amp;autoStart=true">http://www.kctv5.com/video?clipId=9282741&amp;autoStart=true</a>
9/26/13	Kansas City Star	Star Shots - VML Foundation Day at Gibbs Road Farm	<a href="http://www.kansascity.com/2013/09/26/4511158/star-shots-best-photos-from-sept.html">http://www.kansascity.com/2013/09/26/4511158/star-shots-best-photos-from-sept.html</a>
September	M Magazine	Cultivate Kansas City supporting area farmers and urban gardeners	

*They are scheduling community presentations:*

*The team gives presentations with culturally appropriate visual aids, hand-outs and training materials. They contact community-based organizations to schedule these presentations, including churches, community centers, neighborhood associations, other nonprofit and community service agencies. On a*

*monthly basis, each team member conducts an average of two presentations and six initial meetings with groups or individuals in Kansas.*

We did 34 outreach meetings and public presentations, reaching approximately 327 individuals with information about growing fresh fruits and vegetables. The groups we worked with included the City of Mission staff, the KU Food is Medicine group, KCK Neighborhood Resource Center, Wyandotte High School, Somali Foundation, and others. In some cases, we presented the GGKC introductory PowerPoint, explaining the value of local fruits and vegetables, why it is important to eat locally, and different models for producing food; in other cases, we started with the person/ groups interest and walked with them through an analysis and options process.

Goal 2: Develop new growers for Kansas City

*The organization offers annual "How to Start an Urban Farm," "How to Home and Community Garden," and "How to School Garden" workshop series. The workshops are also offered in a more tailored form for specific communities or interest groups. The group is also going to offer in the fall of 2012 and rolling out, more focused workshops, with the fall 2012 topics to include Water Catchment and Irrigation Options, Homemade Greenhouses and Cold Frames, and On-Site and Market Sales for Small Growers*

We offered eight urban farming workshops, with 69 attendees from both Kansas and Missouri (including duplicates). We organized 4 community gardening workshops with 113 people attending (including duplicates); 6 general workshops on topics relevant to both gardeners and farmers, with 106 attendees. The groups we presented individualized workshops for included the Kansas Bhutanese Community Foundation garden; H2O to Grow potential grant applicants; and others.

*They offer individualized, one-on-one assistance:*

*Once an individual or group has expressed interest in growing, one or more members of the team are assigned to support their identified needs relative to becoming involved in urban agriculture, increasing skills and production of food, and improving networking and access to further resources. Each team member will meet an average of 30 individuals or groups from Kansas each year. Team members provide technical assistance including accessing land; site improvements for growing; production schedules; production planning, harvesting practices; produce marketing and distribution; business plan development; and community engagement.*

The GGKC staff provided 172 technical assistance sessions with 219 people attending (including duplicates) for a total of 350 TA hours. The farmers and would-be farmers we worked with included Renee Kelly, who was (and still is) exploring starting a farm to support her Johnson County restaurant, Harvest; the Unity Church of Overland Park garden, growing food for low-income children at Head Start; Mama Tu's Family Farm, Boys Grow, Karlean Kramer, Blue Door Farm, and others. We also worked extensively with Broadmoor Technical School's Culinary Program, assisting them with planning for a chef's educational garden, which didn't come to fruition because the School District made a decision to relocate the school program to another school in 2-3 years, and a ¼ acre school farm, which is beginning production in the spring of 2014.

*We will connect new growers to other programs:*

*The team actively refers people to other established programs, including but not exclusively: K-State Extension, KS Department of Agriculture, Farm Service Agency, Natural Resources Conservation Services, EPA, KC Food Policy Coalition, Food Not Lawns, and Green Acres.*

While we didn't set up a system for tracking referrals, we estimate that, on average, our TA recipients are referred to a minimum of 2 other agencies/ organizations. We helped farmers with connecting to

extension for soil tests; we assisted several with NRCS high tunnel applications and information; we referred people to the Brownfield program at MARC; we made many referrals to other organizations.

Goal 2: Support growers in transforming land into productive green space

*They will identify empty lots:*

*The team members will work with city and state agencies, neighborhood associations, Extension staff, and other stakeholders to identify and develop sites for new growers. They will focus on vacant lots within the targeted geographic focus of this pilot project to find land for growers. The team will learn and document information pertaining to codes, permits, environmental regulations, and structures, with one team member specializing in these issues. They will research and organize information relevant for growers regarding water, soil remediation, and storm water.*

The staff worked with several Wyandotte county growers and organizations looking for land. We provided assistance to Karlean Krammer as she purchased and developed more vacant lots on her block for food production; we worked with applicants to the H2O to Grow fund identify additional urban lots they could work with, including Crosslines Community Outreach and Rosedale Development Association; we coordinated a coalition, H2O to Grow, of Wyandotte County growers that were successful in helping the Public Works Department and the Public Health Department set up a grants process to help growers get funding for water connections to increase production at their farms and gardens with a high priority of growers who would be working with vacant lots and lots presently/ formerly owned by the Land Bank. Of the six farmers/ groups that were awarded water connections, two gardens are located on public land and four are on sites that were former Land Bank properties where houses used to be located.

*The Get Growing team will complete accomplish the goals of the projects by completing the activities outlined below.*

	<b>Sept - March 2012</b>	<b>April - Sept 2013</b>	<b>Status</b>
<b>Develop and Manage Program</b>	Trainings continue; ongoing discussion and individual and group learning; Data collected, program evaluation; fundraising	Trainings continue; ongoing discussion and individual and group learning; Data collected, program evaluation; fundraising	The team met bi-weekly, the management team met approximately 10 times to evaluate and oversee the program. This process led to a 2 year extension of the GGKC project, into mid-2015.
<b>Public Outreach in Kansas</b>	45 public talks	30 public talks	See above
<b>Workshops</b>	<i>How to start an urban farm (condensed and longer versions for specific groups), Selling Excess Produce, Water Catchment &amp; Access, Home-Built Greenhouses and Cold-frames</i>	<i>Selling Excess Produce, How to start an urban farm</i>	<i>All of these workshops were offered, plus more tailored workshops for specific groups. See above</i>
<b>Contact Potential / Existing Farmer</b>	10 prospective farmers; Evals with farmers 75% report changes in practices, improved economics; 3 new farming operations started,	17 prospective farmers; 2 new farming operations started bringing 1-2 acres into production Ongoing TA with farmers and	See above for TA details. We did not do formal evaluations with TA recipients because of limitations of staff time.

	<b>Sept - March 2012</b>	<b>April - Sept 2013</b>	<b>Status</b>
	bringing 1-2 acres into production Ongoing TA with farmers and prospective farmers Refer 30 prospective farmers to other programs, agencies; 10 utilize their services 10 home/community gardeners begin to sell produce 7 new food projects begin	prospective farmers Refer 30 prospective farmers to other programs; 10 utilize their services, agencies 10 home/community gardeners sell their produce 2 community garden engages in on-site selling	<p>We assisted in the start-up of: 8 Farms, totaling around ½ acre; a number of the growers are selling at a very small scale, including 2 community gardeners.</p> <p>We worked with two existing, and three potential Community gardens (one of which started in 2014).</p> <p>We provided staff structure and leadership to four coalition efforts- H2O to Grow which resulted in the HsO to Grow fund), Your Neighborhood Market (a collab effort to bring small neighborhood markets serving low income neighborhoods together for capacity building, marketing), the Greater KC Food Hub project (ongoing), and the Veggie Scrip (which disbanded).</p> <p>We assisted with nine food projects, including assisting two potential farmers market start-ups.</p>
<b>Develop Materials and Curriculum</b>	Materials refined, other materials produced as needed	Materials refined, other materials produced as needed	We developed Water Audit materials to help growers evaluate their current water resource management practices and develop comprehensive plans for the future. We developed curriculum on water management, transplant production, structures for season extension.

### **Beneficiaries**

We worked with 33 farmers or individuals in the process of exploring farming; 9 charitable/ educational gardens or exploratory efforts, 7 community gardens/ gardens in development, 7 coalitions (including Wyandotte County's Healthy Communities Wyandotte and JoCo Healthy Foods, both with a strong focus

on local food and urban/ peri-urban agriculture), and two organizations exploring setting up farmers markets. Of these, 60% are located in/ serving high need communities (high poverty rates and/ or low food access).

Get Growing KC Mini-Grants were made to the following KS farms and gardens: Kim Wilson Housing, Banda Family Farm, Hillcrest Transitional Housing of Kansas, Rainbow Mennonite Church, St. Joseph Neighborhood Garden, Cross-Lines Community Outreach, Inc., Gospel Mission Baptist Church, Metro Lutheran Ministry, Salt of the Earth Youth Market Garden, Sunflower Sisters Urban Farm, and Unity Garden. All of these are growing food that directly benefits low-income communities, with fruits and vegetables being sold by some at KCK farmers markets, others distributing through food pantries; and others being community gardens where people can grow their own.

### **Lessons Learned**

We continue to see interest in all types of growing, distributing, and accessing locally grown fruits and vegetables. For some, their interest in becoming an urban farmer is clear; for others, they are in more of an exploratory process that may or may not result in them becoming sellers. We provide support to this full-range of interests, recognizing, after many years of working with growers, that sometimes, the individual we met with five years ago who dropped out of sight may reappear, ready to start farming and highly focused. And, often, someone who starts out with an interest in farming may instead learn through the process that they are more equipped to become food educators, or leaders in a non-profit in changing the food culture. As a society, we are in a time of major learning and change around local food and healthy eating; we see the same learning curve with individuals as they sort through their interests, their personal capacities, their skills, and their life goals.

Working with community-based organizations, a typical starting point is "we want to start a community garden" and often our job has been to pull them back, help them learn more about the strategies available to them, and then work to identify which strategies fit their specific constituency and organization. This process is also, from our side, one of patience, of recognizing that seeds get planted and germinate when they are ready!

### **Project Contact Information**

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## April 2014, KDA Final Performance Report

Title: Highland Community College 2013 Viticulture and Enology Extension Project

Summary: This proposal sought funding with two main motivating factors. First and foremost, the Kansas grape and wine industry needs a source of education, training, and consultation. This project provided funds for HCC to offer workshops, phone/email consultation, and site visits across the entire state. Kansas has no other public or private organization that specializes in education or training grape growers and winemakers. The Kansas land-grant university does not offer extension services in this industry. Therefore, this project sought to fill that void of training, education, and professional consultation. Secondly, HCC sought to offer a service specific to the wineries in the form of the lab analysis of juice and wine samples. Currently, the closest lab that offers juice/wine analysis commercially is Iowa State University. Beyond ISU, Kansas wineries must utilize businesses on the east and west coast. HCC sought to close this distance and shipping time/expense by offering this service right here in Kansas.

Several current vineyard owners and winemakers in Kansas got their start in the past 1-3 years. Many of these entrepreneurs first realized that this industry is financially feasible by attending workshops hosted by HCC, funded by previous SCBGP awards. Some of these new business owners have grown to depend on HCC personnel for consultation and continuing education and training through workshops. Additionally, some of these new business owners are actively recruiting prospective industry members by accompanying them to the continued schedule of workshops. Finally, in some workshops HCC has invited university experts to present to the workshop attendees. These guest speaker opportunities serve to increase the network of experts within Kansas in areas related to growing grapes and making wine such as entomology, horticulture, agritourism, and permaculture

Project Approach: HCC staff hosted and taught five workshops across Kansas: Wichita (vineyard pesticides: 5 attendees), Kansas City (harvest parameters: 9 attendees), Topeka (home winemaking: 25 attendees), Hiawatha (sensory analysis: 28 attendees), and Salina (winery sanitation: 10 attendees). The goal of the workshops was generally to get around 15 or more attendees and to present information that the audience found useful. A bonus goal is always to convince attendees to take the leap and plant some grapevines or start a commercial winery. The total attendance at 2013 workshops was 77 which slightly exceeded the goal. From comments and follow up correspondence, HCC staff feels confident that the information was useful and in some cases just the beginning for some attendees. A few of the workshop attendees sent follow-up questions via email and phone calls. A couple of the attendees also took advantage of the information and are planning vineyard plantings in spring 2014

HCC personnel conducted a total of 38 vineyard/winery on-site consultations in 2013. HCC personnel attended annual state association grape/wine conferences in CO, NE, MO, CA, and TX and brought information from those conferences home. HCC also presented at the KS grape/wine conference. Attending these state conferences allows staff to learn the most up to date practices in commercial grape growing and winemaking as well as make industry contacts. This information is brought back to Kansas and disseminated through the KS Grapes list, workshops, classes, and the HCC Facebook page.

HCC staff answered countless emails and phone calls from current and prospective members of the grape and wine industry. The running tally of number of phone calls and emails was interrupted mid-spring, but the number is estimated to be more than five per week which is over 250 for the entire year.

Finally, HCC purchased the lab equipment as listed in the grant proposal. The equipment is capable performing many advanced tests on wine beyond the usual things like alcohol content and acid levels. HCC hired a part-time lab assistant to learn how to operate the new lab equipment and perform the lab analyses. HCC suffered two missteps in this portion of the project. First, the lab equipment did not include crucial software necessary to perform the work. Funds from the lab assistant salary of the project were substituted and used to purchase the additional software. Secondly, the hired lab assistant was not a proficient employee. Customers were not satisfied with the work done on the first two sets of wine samples, and word spread. There was not a third set of wine samples for the lab assistant to test, and the employee self-terminated their employment. As the end of the year was fast approaching, there was not sufficient time to hire and train another lab assistant. The equipment is still utilized by HCC staff for classroom use, but it is no longer available for commercial use to outside wineries. In all, HCC offered wine analysis to three wineries. HCC did not charge any fees for the three wineries submitting samples. The first two were not charged because they were the college’s test run to get the logistics worked out. The third was not completed in a timely, efficient manner. HCC personnel chose not to charge the customer as they were not pleased with the service

The initial work plan for the project included this rough calendar of workshops:

Month	Planned Activities	Workshop Type
January	Kansas Grape/Wine Conference	
February	Workshop 1: Sensory Analysis/Wine Flaws/Solutions	Winery
April	Workshop 2: Pesticides/Herbicides, Irrigation Systems	Vineyard
June	Workshop 3: Basic Winemaking	Winery
July	Workshop 4: Harvest Parameters/Logistics	Vineyard
October	Workshop 5: Spring Planting Preparation	Vineyard

The order and topics of the workshops changed during the planning stages well after the original proposal was written. The workshops were completed in this order: First was workshop 2 in Wichita, second was workshop 4 in Kansas City, third was workshop 1 in Hiawatha, fourth was workshop 3 in Topeka, and fifth was a Winery Sanitation workshop held in Salina.

The workshop included a voluntary questionnaire for attendees to complete as a measure of successful teaching and learning during the workshop. Below are the questions that were planned to ask as well as response rates (correct out of total answered). Note that not all attendees chose to answer the questions.

1. Sensory: (out of 28 attendees)
  - What does “band-aid” smell in the wine mean? (12 correct)
  - What does wine with high volatile acidity smell like? (21)
  - What is one method a winemaker could use to “fix” wine that smells “skunky”? (14)
  - If a white wine is “medium straw” in color when it’s bottled, why is that not good? (12)

2. Pesticides, herbicides, irrigation: (out of 5 attendees)

When is an ideal time to apply herbicide in the vine row? (5 correct)

When are the most important fungicides applied? (5)

What is the most commonly used vineyard pesticide? (5)

What does the abbreviation P.H.I. represent? (3)

3. Basic Winemaking (out of 25 attendees)

What is the most commonly overlooked aspect of winemaking? (12 correct)

Why is it more difficult to make good white wine than red wine? (22)

Why is malolactic fermentation important? (10)

Why is it important to know whether wine is fully dry or not? (19)

4. Late summer/fall harvest parameters/logistics: (out of 9 attendees)

How often should the grape grower supply chemical analyses to the winemaker as harvest approaches? (8 correct)

Whose responsibility is it to accurately estimate the size of the crop? (9)

Why do many winemakers like to delay harvest? (8)

What does the grape grower do after harvest is over (besides cash the check)? (7)

5. Spring planting preparation This workshop changed, and different questions used.

When is the ideal time to begin preparing for spring vine planting?

What's the best way to lower a vineyard's soil pH?

Why is a good idea to have the drip irrigation system installed in the fall?

What is a good technical question to ask a potential vine nursery before you order vines?

**Beneficiaries:** This project directly benefitted all of the workshop attendees as well as those current and prospective members of the industry who sought consultation through site visits, email correspondence, and phone calls. Members of the Kansas grapes email list received information from HCC staff regarding grape conferences in surrounding states, and followers on the HCC V&E Facebook page received information directly from HCC as well as articles and information shared on the page. Placing a precise number on this count is difficult, but adding up the 77 attendees, 38 site visits, 196 followers on Facebook, and the numerous phone/email consultations there could be no less than 300 direct beneficiaries from this project.

**Lessons Learned:** HCC staff learned that the Kansas grape and wine industry continues to seek and make good use of workshops and individual consultations. Based on attendance, HCC learned that there is a large population of Kansans who are curious and interested in learning about how the wine industry works. The Sensory and Winemaking workshops each had nearly double the number of attendees as the other, more technical workshops. This bodes well for continued industry expansion as well as an expanding customer base. HCC learned that there is only so much current staff levels are able to achieve, and expanding into other avenues of services is too much. Sticking to what the program does well (growing grapes, making wine, and helping others do the same) will remain the focus of HCC. Adding other services like wine

lab analysis as well as other potential projects like nursery-scale vine propagation and others need to remain on the shelf until more fulltime staff are hired.

Contact Person: Scott Kohl, HCC Viticulture and Enology Program Director. 500 Miller Drive, Wamego, KS 66547. skohl@highlandcc.edu. 785-456-6006

Other Information: The HCC program bottled its first vintage of commercial wine in summer 2013. The wine performed well at the KS grape/wine conference in January 2014 winning Best in Class in the semi-sweet white wine category as well as Best in Show with a dry Chambourcin wine. In fall 2013 HCC was awarded funding from National Science Foundation to expand the vineyard, purchase mechanized vineyard equipment, and hire an additional staff member to develop and teach curriculum focused on mechanized viticulture.

# **Feasibility of Expanding Vegetable Production in Western Kansas**

**Rawlins County Extension Council**

**Grant Awarded: \$36,575**

## **FINAL REPORT**

### **Project Summary**

The initial purpose of the project was to determine the feasibility of using vegetable production to expand producer operations in Western Kansas by considering market, production, distribution and financial elements related to vegetable production in a regional food system. The project was to address the issue of producers meeting the current and growing consumer demand for farm fresh vegetables and provides an entry point for beginning farmers.

By researching existing production methods for vegetables such as open field growing, high tunnels, traditional greenhouses and hydro-systems and applied to Western Kansas climate, economics and markets was expected to allow existing, beginning and socially disadvantaged producers to have access to the information necessary to make decisions of adding vegetables to their farm's production plans.

Producers were identified and given assistance with developing production plans to implement on their farms. Beginning and socially disadvantaged farmers were targeted directly to receive this information.

This project was expected to help increase the awareness of specialty crops to other existing farms or those beginning farmers interested in starting in Western Kansas by showing the potential value of a specialty crop enterprise and help increase the sale of specialty crops by aiding the expansion of specialty crop production for local producers selling on-line to a local and Denver area customer base. This project will help producers improve distribution and lower production cost/risk by exposing them to an alternative on-line market and to develop and implement new or expanded specialty crop production plans.

This project did not build on a previously funded SCBGP project, nor has it been submitted to or funded by another federal or state grant program.

### **Project Approach**

The following is a scope of work was originally proposed for this project:

Goal 1: Explore vegetable market

- Survey current customers to identify vegetable needs; include product interest, volume estimates, pricing, quality requirements, and pick-up location options
- Add vegetable survey to reseller analysis currently being done and explore farmer market and local grocery store options
- Evaluate expanded market potential and options through market research within service area for retail market outlets

Goal 2: Analyze production potential, methods and capital costs

- Identify 2-3 producers who have the interest, skills and capacity to expand into vegetable production. Include at least one socially disadvantaged and beginning farmer in producer analysis.

- Help producers compare the start-up and operating costs of using high tunnels, greenhouses, and open fields for vegetable production.
- Develop simple yield calculators based on existing yield estimates for high demand crops including tomatoes, peppers, cucumbers, and lettuce.
- Work with producer network to build a PPT that helps transfer the above tools to producers with the interest, skills and capacity to expand into vegetable production.
- Identify likely crop production issues and challenges.
- Identify capital requirements for proposed production tools and methods for 2-3 producers agreeing to grow vegetables.
- Assist 2-3 producers to develop vegetable production expansion plans.
- Coach 1-2 producers on starting expansion implementation (2-3 sessions each).

#### Goal 3: Develop small distribution system for vegetable products

- Explore how to integrate vegetable products into current distribution system.
- Identify likely challenges associated with integrating vegetable products into current system.
- Identify options to address challenges associated with integrating vegetable products into current system.

#### Goal 4: Complete a financial and feasibility analysis

- Consider vegetable enterprise budgets currently being developed at KSU for fit (if available).
- Integrate production, capital and input numbers.
- Develop 3-year projections and cash flows for up to 3 producers based on capital requirements, pricing, enterprise budgets (if available).

#### Goal 5: Public dissemination of information

- Make project summary information available on Extension, FSA and community websites upon project completion.
- Deliver a workshop about the project as part of annual spring 2013 e-ship fair at USD 105.
- Engage local FFA teacher (Rawlins County) about using greenhouse test facility at school (USD 105) and present project summary information to local vo-ag classes.
- Deliver project presentation at annual HPFC board meeting (progress January 2013, final January 2014); Audience includes current and prospective coop members/customers and major stakeholders, local and regional organizations interested in local foods (60-80 typically in attendance).

The following summarizes the activities and tasks performed during the grant period.

#### First Project quarter

Project startup was initiated. The current distribution system analysis was initiated with a review of current distribution practices, growth producers were identified and initial screening taken place, interview preparations were initiated and scheduled and planning for market analysis initiated.

#### Second Project quarter

Screening visitations with producers continued with 2 growth producers identified and specialty crop planning initiated with one producer. Expected vegetable product demand for 2013 was analyzed and compared to production interest with potential producers. Current guidelines proposed by FDA, USDA, trade associations for the safe production and distribution of produce were reviewed. Locally sourced food market trends were researched, market interview questions prepared, one trial interview conducted and identification of other interviewees initiated. Two volume reseller accounts were established to purchase vegetables in season for their community food programs. Trial bi-monthly deliveries were started with full implementation planned for summer. Surveys were conducted to determine crop demand and included in project production and data collection. These crops are being matched with growth

producer production plans and will be used to develop spreadsheet tools and yield calculators. Work was initiated on open field and high tunnel production budgets, data collection templates, budget assumptions, labor forecasting and yield estimating.

#### Third Project quarter

Producer visits continued with one additional growth producer being added to the portfolio and planning initiated with another for a total of 3. Market research interviews were completed and a report on findings drafted. Production Cost Estimates were developed for Open Field and High Tunnel production of 4 vegetable products along with assumptions used in cost of production estimates. Initiated development of presentation for producers and creation of production cost estimate template for greenhouse production of crops. Distribution analysis nearly completed with draft report expected in early June. Bi-monthly deliveries to three volume accounts were initiated.

#### Fourth Project quarter

Visitations with growth producers continued. Final count for expansion planning work will be 3 producers with 4 more in pipeline for assistance. Market research report were summarized for planning purposes; Production Cost estimates were applied to 2 of the 3 producers and cash flow scenarios developed based on 2013 projected yields. If 2013 growth projections are realized, 2 of the 3 vegetable producers could grow 75% and 85% respectively in 2013 with 1.75x to 4x possible growth projected over 5 years. Completed vegetable distribution integration analysis and summarized report for planning purposes. Three more vegetable producers were added to the market network. The producer network has seen monthly vegetable sales grow from \$800 to \$1800 from 2012 to 2013.

#### Fifth Project quarter

Prepared and delivered project presentation as summary report in Atwood, KS with (48) school, extension, HPFC and community leaders in attendance. Gave brief presentations about the project at Atwood Rotary 10/10/13, Bird City Senior Center 10/28/13, McDonald Senior Center 11/4/13 and St. Francis Senior Center 12/5/13. Average attendance was 30-35. Project presentation was completed at Rawlins Extension Annual Board meeting with 36 in attendance on 11/25/13. Summary of project was also presented to producer network Annual Board meeting in January 2014.

The primary contributors to this project included:

The producers involved, sharing their production and financial information and preparing expansion plans.

The High Plains Food Coop network provided a ready outlet for producer's product and the market relationships necessary to test additional product lines.

The technical assistance team helping guide the production, distribution and marketing work including Marcy Phelps - Phelps Research, Blake Angelo - Colorado State University Extension, Leon Atwell - Advancing Rural Prosperity and Chris Sramek - High Plains Food Coop.

### **Goals and Outcomes Achieved**

The following are outcomes originally proposed for this project with results noted in parenthesis:

#### Expected Measurable Outcomes

Measureable Outcome: Two to three producers will have growth plans for expanding into specialty crop vegetable production and one to two producers will be implementing their growth plans for specialty crop vegetable production. (2 producers developed growth plans and started implementing those plans with a third producer initiating their planning)

Performance measure: One to two producers will start implementing their growth plans for expanding into specialty crop vegetable production within the grant year (Year 1). (2 did)

Goal: An overall increase in 1-2 new producers of specialty crop vegetables. (4 new producers)  
Target: 50 percent increase of new producers growing specialty crop vegetables in Year 1. With the information available from this study and positive feasibility results, it is anticipated that 1-2 new producers will add specialty crop vegetable production to their operations annually beyond Year 1. (increased from 4 to 8 or 200%)

Baseline: Four known producers currently growing specialty crop vegetables for sale in the area Cheyenne, Rawlins, Thomas, Sherman County area not including smaller growers selling to farmer's markets.

The following additional outcomes are also anticipated from the Work Plan:

- A basic vegetable market will be identified within the producer network service area for volume, products and pricing. (completed)
- Exploration of vegetable distribution integration will be completed. (completed)
- Financial projections and cash flows will be completed on adding vegetable production for up to 3 producer scenarios. (completed for 2 producers)
- At least 100 community members including youth will be presented the project information and project results will be accessible to others via the Project Host's website at the conclusion of the project. (over 200 were presented to)
- Assuming it is feasible to do so, specialty crop vegetable production in the producer network system will expand by 200% within a year of completion of this project; sales will be tracked monthly. (expanded 225% during the project period)
- At least one beginning or socially disadvantaged farmer will be included in the project. (7 beginning or socially disadvantaged farmers were included)

All proposed measurable outcomes noted above were met or exceeded.

The following also summarizes the goals completed during the grant period:

Goal 1 completed: Retail institutional market exploration was initiated and initial overview completed

Goal 2 completed: 2 vegetable producers have growth plans completed and have started implementing those plans; In addition a third producer has initiated their expansion plan and 4 more are in the pipeline for assistance; (Out of these 7 producers - 6 are socially disadvantaged and 1 is a beginning farmer)

Goal 3 completed: vegetable system integration analysis completed with a recommended system change and safe handling procedures identified

Goal 4 completed: Financial projections and cash flows were completed for 2 producers as part of their expansion planning work then projection and cash flow tools were incorporated into individual producer's expansion planning

Goal 5 achieved with dissemination of project information at extension, senior center, HPFC and community leader's meetings.

## **Beneficiaries**

Primary project beneficiaries were the specialty crop industry in Northwest Kansas namely the producers directly and indirectly assisted by this project and the distribution system of the producer network. The customers and consumers in the marketplace benefit by having a greater volume and variety of vegetables to choose from and the local economy benefits by having producers with diverse revenue streams working to bring young people back home.

Two producers increased their revenue from vegetable sales over 75% during the project period and could quadruple their sales in 3-5 years. It is estimated that if 3 out of 4 of the producers assisted were to sustain growth over the next 3 years the local economy would realize up to 5 more jobs as a result.

### **Lessons Learned**

Identifying producers willing to grow is a more of challenge than was anticipated at the outset. The only area unfinished was working on numbers for greenhouses but we were unable to find the information needed in the timeframe allotted. The farm to table market for vegetables is growing and the need for producers to meet the demand continues to be strong. The need to expand the work started with this project is clearly evident as well.

A KDA staffer mentioned that this was one of the best projects completed under the SCBGP and that we should be helping other KDA projects be as successful.

### **Project Contact Information**

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# **Expanding Healthy Food Production Through High Tunnel Technical Assistance**

**Stafford County Economic Development  
Grant Awarded: \$41,615**

## **FINAL REPORT**

### **Project Summary**

The initial purpose of the project was to increase the specialty crop industry while increasing economic activity. Fostering entrepreneurship is a strategy of Stafford County Economic Development to increase employment, and this type of entrepreneurship fits well in our context. We are a farming community and in general people understand this type of business. It also fits our community because our county is putting effort into improving public health and part of two separate grants that are working to improve public health specifically through better nutrition.

In this grant, Economic Development's role was to push the program participants to a higher level of performance by educating them on how to grow 1) more volume of production, using the extended season in a high tunnel; and 2) to help them see the opportunities for sales and then actively work to secure those sales.

Economic Development approached this project with the philosophy that people will keep doing what they can make money doing. It is in the county's economic as well as public health interests, and that of the specialty crop industry, if we position people to be profitable through successfully growing fresh produce.

One nice story from this project that helps underscore its importance is that the availability of this program is what helped one young family finalize its decision to move back to the rural area from Kansas City. When the program became available the young woman, her husband, and young son were living in Kansas City but considering options to move back home. She encouraged her dad to apply, with the thinking that if he was chosen her family would move back and she and her dad would take the project on together...which is exactly what happened.

This program does not build specifically on another USDA funded program, but it does coincide nicely with another initiative in which Stafford County participates, which is the Healthy Communities Initiative through Kansas Health Foundation. This initiative seeks to improve public health through better nutrition and increased exercise. The work to make healthier eating more accessible and more routine is certainly complimented by the fact that we have five businesses growing vegetables. This also coincided with the Chronic Disease Risk Reduction program administered by the county health department that helped to reorganize a local farmer's market in St. John. Each of these programs working together added to the success of all.

### **Project Approach**

This approach to building profit-making business was seen as a way to ensure sustainability of the initiative beyond the grant period, thereby also serving the purpose of enhance the competitiveness of the specialty crop industry as is the goal of the Specialty Crop Block Grant Program.

This project supported by this grant involved selecting five local participants to receive a 20 x 60 high tunnel kit and the technical assistance to erect it and grow vegetables within it. After the program was publicized, ten applications were received and the Stafford EcoDevo board of directors selected the top five for participating in the program. Participants were given the option of attending the Great Plains Growers Conference in St. Joseph MO, and two families took advantage of that opportunity.

Stafford County Economic Development surveyed 20 wholesale buyers, ranging from local restaurants and nursing homes to the Dillon's distribution center in the neighboring county and an independent foodservice distributor covering the state of KS. From this survey we were able to provide grant participants specific information about what products these buyers demand, and what price they are willing to pay. We also provided market data on what markets were available for them to sell in.

Stafford EcoDevo used the advice of Cary Rivard, Kansas State Extension Specialist for Specialty Crops, in selecting a model of high tunnel. We purchased five 20x60 size high tunnels and held a workshop for constructing them. Dr. Rivard returned for another field day where he focused on the management of the growing environment in a high tunnel, including fertility, water, and pest management; as well as what certification of Good Agricultural Practices involves and how to prepare one's operation to be successful in obtaining that certification. One of our producers is now GAP certified.

The growing season was off to a late start because the timing of the grant notification (which was later than anticipated when the application was submitted) did not allow for getting the high tunnels built in the fall. Therefore, the construction was delayed until the winter weather cleared (including one significant late spring snowstorm). So the participants lost out on one significant benefit of being able to get an early start on the growing season in the high tunnel. Nonetheless, beginning in April the participants built their own high tunnels and began the work of planting and growing vegetables, which continued through the summer and fall.

We found that there is little professional expertise in the central to western part of Kansas to draw upon for consulting related to high tunnels. There are numerous professional crop consultants in this area, but they do not have knowledge or experience in high tunnels. We found a wonderful resource in Dr. Cary Rivard, and the participants were very positive about the two day-long workshops he conducted. But his location 300 miles east of here meant that he could not work one-on-one with participants at their operation. Dr. Rivard put us in touch with Randy Clark, a grower with whom KSU Extension has partnered in some research. Our group went on a field trip in February where we visited his operation and heard about his experience not only in growing but also selling produce in the Hutchinson/ Wichita area. Being about 60 miles away from Stafford County, he was close enough to be accessible for site visits, but removed enough to not be perceived as a competitor. We formalized an agreement with Mr. Clark for him to come make site visits and work with the growers in a role that ended up looking more like mentoring than traditional crop consulting.

We collected final production reports in October, even though a couple of growers continued limited production through November. We did filming for the video in September and October, and final

editing was complete in November. The video was disseminated on Facebook, our website, and in one school cafeteria. Based in part on this storytelling, the project was further publicized in earned media including the Hutchinson News and KVGB 1590 AM radio.

Based on the inquiries we've received from other counties about how they could also initiate a similar program, the positive feedback from participants, and the fact that this project is continuing even stronger after the grant-funded program is finished, we feel very positive that this was a worthwhile initiative.

## **Goals and Outcomes Achieved**

**Goal #1:** Increase the number of facilities engaged in extended season production of fruit and vegetables sold in regional commercial markets

**Outcome:** Five new high tunnel growing operations were established, with each of the owners/producers being trained through two workshops as well as six months of one-on-one consulting. The growers received a high tunnel kit, attended a construction workshop and a growing workshop, each assembled their own tunnel, and then began growing vegetables within the high tunnel structure. One producer experienced a total crop failure in summer 2013, but all others were successful in growing and selling vegetables into commercial channels. All five operations will continue to grow crops beyond the grant period and have begun the growing season for 2014. All of them have expressed interest in growing their operations beyond the current scope, so the goal of increasing local specialty crop production has certainly been met. None of these growers had high tunnels prior to this project, and each of them have expressed that they would not have made the leap to invest in this venture if it had not been for the grant. This initiative has clearly been the catalyst for new growth.

**Goal #2:** Increase the consumption of locally grown produce in schools, restaurants, institutions, and grocery stores in a four county region.

**Outcome:** Reports submitted by the growers show that produce was purchased by Great Bend Regional Hospital, USD Stafford 349, Mom's Café, Paul's Grocery Store, Delgado's restaurant, Stafford County Hospital, Leisure Homestead (nursing home). The amount grown was absorbed primarily in a two county region (Barton and Stafford). In addition to wholesale, three growers found good success in selling at farmer's markets.

**Measure:** In the production reports, we asked them to report the "quantity harvested" and some reported in pounds, others in number of vegetables. Although awkward for our reporting, it makes sense since some vegetables are customarily sold by the pound, and others, such as cucumbers, are typically sold by the unit. So providing one overall number that quantifies exactly the amount of consumption is difficult. Moreover, they experimented considerably with various varieties of produce; for example, one had 31 varieties of produce in her tunnel. Another grew just two things: cucumbers and tomatoes. Finally, one operator experienced a total loss to the summer crop, so the contribution from that tunnel to supply food to institutions was minimal.

All of the following measured production is new production, and represents an increase in consumption of locally-grown fresh produce consistent with this goal:

Tomatoes: 4,568 pounds  
Cucumbers: 702 cucumbers  
Peppers (all varieties): 528 pounds  
Green Beans: 25 gallons  
Lettuces (all varieties): 65 pounds  
Celery: 45 plants  
Leeks: 20 pounds  
Carrots: 26 pounds  
Swiss chard: 13 pounds  
Radish: 22 bunches  
Spinach: 8 pounds  
Herbs (all varieties) 50 bunches

Goal #3: Increase awareness of local consumers about locally grown produce and the options for consuming it through an informational video.

Outcome: Two videos were produced and distributed. They really show and tell the story better than this written report! They are posted online and can be viewed at [www.staffordecodevo.com/videos.php](http://www.staffordecodevo.com/videos.php). In addition to the website, they have been distributed on Facebook and we can measure over 4,670 people reached (which is more than the entire population of Stafford County). We also distributed them through an e-newsletter to 200 readers. Therefore, the stated target of having reached 25% of the population of Stafford County (pop. 4,375) was exceeded.

We have a monthly ½ hour talk radio program on KVGB 1590 Great Bend and have featured this project twice in the past year on that show. During the January episode, we invited two growers in this program to be guests and they did a great job of articulating how this program helped them get started in their operation. These radio programs are broadcast live but recorded and also posted to our website and distributed on Facebook and a monthly e-newsletter to increase the reach.

This high tunnel program was also featured in a front page article in the Hutchinson News on January 14, 2014, which is provided as an attachment.

Kansas Governor Sam Brownback visited one tunnel in April 2013, which also garnered good local publicity. The state senator and state representative for this area also visited the tunnel, and continue to inquire how the project is progressing, and one seems interested to replicate the program in his hometown. We have received inquiries from at least four other economic development offices around the state inquiring how to apply for the program.

Although it is outside the grant period, another avenue we will use the video produced by this grant is through a new digital projection system at the local theater in Stafford. Stafford EcoDevo has supported the renovation of the theater, and as a sponsor has the opportunity to project informational videos prior to the playing of the main feature movie. These videos will be perfectly suited to this and will continue to increase awareness of local consumers.

## **Beneficiaries**

Directly, five farming families benefitted from the direct assistance in establishing vegetable growing operations through the equipment and technical assistance they received through this project. They also benefitted from the nature of a “class” of growers going through the experience together. There was a good amount of information sharing among the growers, and some relationships established that may form the basis for establishing new ventures (i.e. processing or distribution) in the future.

Also, the community at large benefited from the increased availability of fresh produce. All of the produce grown in the tunnels was consumed in a two county area, and local residents responded enthusiastically to the increased availability of high quality fresh produce in a region that has limited choices for fresh produce throughout the year. The produce grown by one family was an important anchor in revitalizing the St. John Farm and Art Market, and there was enthusiastic response from the town. The market will continue in 2014 without grant support. Students in Stafford USD 349 also benefited, as the produce was consumed in school lunches, and will also continue in 2014 and beyond. Great Bend Regional Hospital was also a consistent buyer, and likely benefited as a health organization that offered a greater selection of healthy food to its patients and employees.

### **Lessons Learned**

The philosophy that went into applying for this grant was that, unlike farmer’s markets which are only active a couple of months a year in this area, wholesale markets are available all year and constitute significant consumption. One who wants to be in business in an extended growing season needs to focus on these outlets. The participants of this program did make sales to wholesale markets, but a lesson learned is that they are reluctant to assertively sell into those markets until they are better established as growers. Each of them had a learning curve, even with the consulting support provided, with managing the high tunnel growing environment. They needed at least one growing season of experience to feel like they are able to consistently provide larger quantities demanded by commercial buyers. Hence, they were more comfortable selling in a farmer’s market where there is not a requirement of a certain quantity to be delivered. Nonetheless, they all have expressed an interest in growing their operations, and in 2014 they will have the benefit of a longer growing season (weather delays to constructing the tunnels meant a late start in 2013) with greater volume of production. They have knowledge of what commercial outlets are available, their regulatory requirements, and even contact with professional buyers. It is expected that the commercial sales will continue to develop; it just wasn’t fully achieved all in the first year and within the grant period. Some in the group have expressed openness to working together to supply larger buyers, whether through a cooperative or other structure of venture. Other ideas that have been tossed around include some type of joint distribution or processing.

One grower experience a total crop failure in the summer. Quite simply, the tunnel got too hot and the plants died. This was likely because he was not attentive enough to raising the sidewalls and increasing ventilation, and also he did not choose to purchase at his own expense a sun shade as other growers did. He has learned from this year and expresses that he will do things differently in the coming year.

I believe there was clear value in this being an active, not a passive, learning experience for the participants. In other words, this was more than passively providing information to potential growers through a conference or seminar (although those experiences were included and were useful). By receiving a high tunnel and being required to grow, report, and attend trainings, the participants were motivated (and obligated) to make a substantial commitment to the work building the high tunnel and

doing the growing and selling. We moved people beyond the “kicking the tires” stage to actually doing the work. Now that they’ve got the hardest year under their belt, they all seem to be confident that they will 1) continue growing on their own; and 2) they see the potential to expand their operations.

**Project Contact Information**

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# Improving Kansas Specialty Crop Industry Through Enhancements to State Trademark Program

**Kansas Department of Agriculture**

**Grant Awarded: \$61,398.24**

## **FINAL REPORT**

### **Project Summary**

Prior to this project, specialty crop producers in Kansas did not have a “one-stop shop” or resource to seek out to promote their specialty crop business. The enhancements to the Kansas State Trademark Program achieved in this grant give producers this opportunity that is easily accessed. Equally important, the promotion program is now setup for increased financial stability.

The Kansas Department of Agriculture (KDA) purchased the brand and the online “food hub” website from the Kansas Rural Center (KRC), Our Local Foods (OLF) [www.ourlocalfoodskans.org](http://www.ourlocalfoodskans.org). The KDA ag marketing team merged the Our Local Foods program and services into the existing state trademark program, *From the Land of Kansas*. The ag marketing team made this transition to insure the trademark program is a one stop shop of Kansas specialty crop producers to promote their businesses and products to Kansas consumers. The *From the Land of Kansas* program is designed for financial stability.

The mission of OLF was to raise awareness of food grown on local farms, encourage small businesses to flourish, and grow the local economy. It was developed by the KRC through the specialty crop block grant in the early 2010s. In 2012, they ran out of funding and asked the KDA to purchase the program and incorporate the services of Our Local Foods and the geographic regions into KDA’s plans for the *From the Land of Kansas* program.

As of January 1, 2013, the KDA reviewed the program, and incorporated the services offered by OLF into the *From the Land of Kansas* program. During this review, it was discovered that the [www.ourlocalfoodskans.org](http://www.ourlocalfoodskans.org) website was built without enough electronic security, causing spam for membership by companies and products that were not relevant or appropriate to KS growers and producers. Due to this instability, as of November 4, 2013, the [www.ourlocalfoodskans.org](http://www.ourlocalfoodskans.org) website was rerouted to [www.fromthelandofkansas.com](http://www.fromthelandofkansas.com).

Information and documents continuing knowledge, program operations etc., was transferred to the *From the Land of Kansas* staff. Full website and social media platforms were transferred to the *From the Land of Kansas* program. Ongoing services such as newsletters, website updates and blogs continued on a modified schedule. The consumer supporter list of the OLF program was in excess of 1,500 OLF consumer members. Prior to the OLF website being redirected to the *From the Land of Kansas* page, there was an increase of around 10 member companies. *From the Land of Kansas* includes 18 categories of Kansas agricultural and food products and has several membership categories that target OLF farmers including, farmer/rancher, fruits and vegetables, flowers and plants, agritourism, farmers markets, supporting organizations and community supported agriculture (CSA).

All OLF members were given a ten month open window to sign up as a member of the *From the Land of Kansas* program. Outreach was conducted through farm visits, conferences and other special events that involved members of the OLF program. The *From the Land of Kansas* website was completed in August 2013, while the website was being constructed there was a focus on incorporating the services and benefits the OLF program. The website was built to provide greater tools to specialty crop producers including a Buy & Sell portal where companies were able to post available products, as well

as post “looking for” requests. OLF members are still advised to join the *From the Land of Kansas* program.

The OLF consumer and farm members were encouraged to join the *From the Land of Kansas*. The KDA was unable to merge the OLF Facebook pages into the *From the Land of Kansas* page. The OLF social media pages had a total of less than 1,500 likes from the 36 counties they represented. *From the Land of Kansas* represents all 105 counties, and has more than 4,500 likes in 18 months since launching. *From the Land of Kansas* has more than 160 companies signed on as members and partners of the program.

### **Project Approach**

The transfer and integration of the brand and websites of OLF into the state trademark program, *From the Land of Kansas* all tasks associated with transfer of ownership occurred. The transfer involved intellectual property, in person meetings, website authorizations and social media management. Primary outreach to members and consumers was conducted through electronic communications and direct outreach through visits and phone calls. All members received a personal phone call about the transition. All consumers were invited to stay involved with the program through social media and through consumer newsletters.

Through the evaluation of monthly newsletter to all current OLF members and *From the Land of Kansas* members, it was decided that it would be more beneficial to combine the OLF website to the developing *From the Land of Kansas* website so that there was not a duplication of efforts or platforms. Also in evaluation of websites, the OLF website received many spammed member applications, and would be too costly to correct. Therefore while the *From the Land of Kansas* website was constructed to remove the ability for content to be posted to the website without an administrator’s permission.

In evaluation of the OLF services, the “food finder” was the most valuable tool on the website, an improved version of the food finder can be found on the [www.fromthelandofkansas.com](http://www.fromthelandofkansas.com). through the Explore *From the Land of Kansas* map. The food finder was also enhanced by the addition of the Buy & Sell portal’s capability to allow members and consumers to post product demand and availability by category. The OLF program provided some support to farmers' markets, therefore the *From the Land of Kansas staff* partnered with the Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE) to conduct Rapid Market Assessments throughout the state. Statistical information was collected to provide communities and other state agencies important information about economic development from farmers’ markets and specialty crop producers. The OLF program, services, website and social media was officially merged with the complete *From the Land of Kansas* program fall 2013. During this time members and consumers were notified nearly 10 months in advance of this to transfer membership. The OLF program logo was replaced with the *From the Land of Kansas* logo, and category icons. This merge was essential to maximize efficiencies and provide a one stop shop to consumers and members in Kansas to source Kansas specialty crops and market their produce.

### **Goals and Outcomes Achieved**

Stated project goals and results:

Goal: By the end of the grant period, to fully integrate the Our Local Food program into the Kansas Department of Agriculture’s trademark program.

Result: The Our Local Food insignia, information, and website is fully integrated into the KDA website and Our Local Food information is fully integrated into the promotional materials given to new and/or continuing members.

Goal: By the end of the grant period, to promote the Our Local Food program to the current 200+ members of the state trademark program.

Result: This program was specifically promoted on three separate occasions to existing members via seminars. In addition, this program was promoted in regular communications to members.

Goal: By the end of the grant period, to increase the number of producers and purchasers enrolled in the "food finder" food network by at least 20 percent.

Result: The goal of this project was to have 66 producers and 24 farmer's markets. At the end of this grant period our enrollment on the website was 130 producers and 30 farmer's markets, which far exceeded the goal.

#### Timeline Narrative

Through cooperation between the KRC and the KDA logistics involving the transfer of the brand and website was able to take place. Open communication and document sharing of designated staff allowed for a smooth transition of knowledge and related information.

In March, five *From the Land of Kansas* seminars were hosted across the state in Garden City, Hays, Manhattan, Olathe and Topeka. At these seminars, the OLF program was advertised as well as KDA's commitment to support farmers of specialty crops. *From the Land of Kansas* staff has also traveled within the state and presented to health organizations and community environment groups that are focused on recruiting farmers markets and specialty crop farms to sign up with the program.

*From the Land of Kansas* staff was able to make person phone calls and emails to OLF members to notify of program changes and the ask to farms to sign up with Level 1, free membership of *From the Land of Kansas* program. *From the Land of Kansas* has hired an intern to specifically work with specialty crop producers to encourage them to apply for membership, and to post specialty crops on the *From the Land of Kansas*, Buy and Sell portal, a feature that was an upgrade from the [www.ourlocalfoodks.org](http://www.ourlocalfoodks.org) website.

The OLF website's rerouting to [www.FromtheLandofKansas.com](http://www.FromtheLandofKansas.com) shows ongoing progress of those who were unaware of the OLF shutdown. The number of *From the Land of Kansas* members has grown as a result of the closing the [www.OurLocalFoods.org](http://www.OurLocalFoods.org) website and the *From the Land of Kansas* Facebook page received more "likes," as well, from former OLF members.

Moving forward, the blog sites' administrators will be continuously sought out, as well as websites that still contain the OLF logo. OLF members who did not respond by joining the *From the Land of Kansas* program have been added to the *From the Land of Kansas* recruitment list, and thus will be further pursued in the future. More research will be done by *From the Land of Kansas* staff on specialty crop farmers in Kansas to add to the recruitment agenda. *From the Land of Kansas* is also working directly with the Kansas Vegetable Producers Association and K-State Research and Extension to increase programing to increase professional development and technical skills of specialty crop producers in Kansas as well as the KDA, Pesticide and Fertilizer division to upgrade the Kansas Sensitive Crop Map to the DriftWatch, Kansas Specialty Crop Registry and mapping tool <https://ks.driftwatch.org/map> to aid specialty and sensitive crop producers in addition to private and commercial applicators.

#### Beneficiaries

All Kansas consumers benefit from the combined services and programing of *From the Land of Kansas* program. The ongoing support from private companies and the KDA and their partners have ensured growth of services to specialty crop producers from staff members as well as marketing tools and resources. Funds from this grant solely benefited these specialty crop producers, the portal described in detail below solely promotes specialty crops and the outreach conducted for this project was targeted to specialty crop producers.

The "Explore *From the Land of Kansas*" searchable map and the "Buy and Sell" portal has been a great tool for individuals, restaurants, schools and institutions who are searching for locally grown specialty crops in Kansas. This portal as well

The 1,500 consumers who followed the OLF program through the Vocal Local program can now see state-wide information about specialty crop producers, in addition to specialty food and meat companies and other value-added agricultural goods through the complete services of the *From the Land of Kansas* program through the [www.fromthelandofkansas.com](http://www.fromthelandofkansas.com) website, Facebook, Twitter, WordPress blog and YouTube channel.

The known 118 farmers markets in Kansas – vendors and market managers as well as consumers have benefited from the merging of services and resources less than one brand. The merging of the OLF program into the *From the Land of Kansas* program widened the reach of the program from 36 counties to state-wide, 105 counties. The Kansas Farmers Market Conference had more than 120 in attendance. There were two days of workshops and keynote speakers. This also spurred the development of the Southeast Kansas Framers Market Vendor Workshop in Pittsburg, Kan. There is also a more unified platform to promote the MarketLink opportunity for farmers to sign up for free equipment to handle SNAP (Kansas Vision) card transactions wherever they sell their specialty crops to consumers. In 2014 the Kansas Department of Agriculture partnered with K-State Research and Extension to edit and reproduce an upgraded document, Food Safety for Kansas Farmers Market Vendors: Regulations and Best Practices.

### **Lessons Learned**

The website transfer from the KRC to the KDA was delayed because of technical problems that arose with the hosting company. As soon as these problems became known, designated staff was able to complete the tasks associated with completing full transfer of ownership.

KRC's list of consumers who signed up online monthly newsletter the "Vocal Local" transfer of those 1,500 contacts was delayed because of staffing miscommunication. The OLF newsletter that was sent out in January, February and April was sent to the complete list. Managing content on the [www.ourlocalfoods.org](http://www.ourlocalfoods.org) website took extensive time to recover because of the spam bots that posted inappropriate content. Time spent managing content delayed producing content for other platforms.

Website hosting company did not update Drupal security, the website template format which has hindered the website's efficiency and ability to recruit additional OLF members. It took time and resources from KDA's Information Technology (IT) department to navigate these issues and update the systems. Current and potential members have contact the coordinator and voiced concerns of the OLF program's reliability as an ethical program; this provided additional reasons why it was best to merge the OLF program and services into the *From the Land of Kansas* program to make efficient use of resources.

The [www.ourlocalfoods.org](http://www.ourlocalfoods.org) website was delayed from October to November as there were some issues with IT department. The OLF Facebook pages were not officially shut down until November 15, 2013, as it takes two weeks to remove a business page from Facebook, and the attempts to merge the Facebook pages did not work. The OLF logo has been replaced with the *From the Land of Kansas* logo on external pages. This purchase was a worthwhile investment for KDA and the *From the Land of Kansas* program.

## **Project Contact Information**

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# **Growing Healthy Communities and Economies Through Northeast Kansas Specialty Crops**

**FINAL REPORT \*previously submitted and approved\***

**Glacial Hills Resource Conservation and Development Inc.  
Grant Awarded: \$13,456.28**

## **Project Summary**

The purpose of the *Growing Healthy Communities and Economies Through Northeast Kansas Specialty Crops* project was to capitalize on northeastern Kansas specialty crop production to improve the health of residents and boost the local economy. The demand for locally grown food is on the increase but families with young children often find themselves challenged by busy schedules to provide healthy, home-cooked meals. Lack of knowledge and experience with cooking from scratch is also common, especially amongst those participating in the WIC (Women, Infants and Children Special Supplemental Nutrition) program. Improving nutrition knowledge and healthy food preparations skills amongst this population are important strategies in addressing the epidemic of childhood obesity.

The objective was to implement a pilot project to determine the effectiveness of in-store events at increasing the sale and consumption of locally-grown specialty crops at five grocery stores. Consumer education and culinary ideas that engages parents and their children in utilizing healthy, local foods was a goal of this project.

Grocery stores, however, continue to capture more than 70 percent of all fresh produce sales. For rural residents, hometown grocery stores are often the most convenient outlet for food purchases. Store owners, while interested in selling locally-grown specialty crops, are challenged to connect with growers. Consumer demand for these products has not yet been established in many of these rural stores. Improving access to local specialty crops by rural populations is an opportunity whose time has come.

Supplying retail buyers and consumers with high-quality, yet affordable, fruits and vegetables is a major challenge faced by Kansas specialty crop producers. Most specialty crop farms are small operations, short on resources and in need of assistance in marketing and educating the public.

This project was successful in creating relationships between specialty crop producers, grocery stores and consumers. The in-store demonstrations of cooking tips and tasting of new recipes was successful in encouraging consumers to buy more specialty crops from producers and grocery stores. Increase in sales of specialty crops was achieved by working with store owners, producers and consumers in promoting what was available in season.

## **Project Approach**

The *Growing Healthy Communities and Economies Through Northeast Kansas Specialty Crops* project approach was to partner with five grocery stores in the Glacial Hills RC&D region to conduct a pilot project to determine the effectiveness of in-store events at increasing the sale and consumption of locally-grown specialty crops. The Specialty Crop Grocery Pilot Project consisted of a series of seasonal cooking demonstrations and tastings that highlight local produce currently available at the store. Each grocery store partner hosted three events. Each event focused on 1-3 fruits and vegetables available during the current season. One store elected to not participate due to a lack of local producers available to work with.

Activities included Increasing the sale and consumption of Kansas-grown specialty crops by partnering with grocery stores to provide cooking demonstrations and tastings of healthy recipes featuring seasonal, local produce. This was successful in that three of four stores experiences increased sales over the previous year.

The project involved developing new relationships between growers, grocery stores, and consumers and to enhance their communication with one another. This project accomplished this as relationships were established with all audiences.

The increase of sales and consumption of Kansas-grown specialty crops through programming that improves consumer nutrition knowledge and preparation skills of seasonal, local produce was accomplished. Consumers were open to tasting new produce they had not tried before.

Being present in the store with the demonstrations was the key to success. Having a farmer's market in the parking lot of one store was an added bonus and work to encourage consumers to try new food items.

### **Goals and Outcomes Achieved**

**Goal 1:** Increase sale and consumption of Kansas-grown specialty crops by providing cooking demonstrations and/or tastings of healthy recipes featuring seasonal, local produce in partnership with grocery stores.

The project partnered with four grocery stores in the Glacial Hills RC&D region to conduct a pilot project to determine the effectiveness of in-store events at increasing the sale and consumption of locally-grown specialty crops. The project conducted a series of cooking demonstrations and tastings that highlighted seasonal local produce that was available at the store. Each grocery store hosted three events with one store hosting multiple events. Each event focused on 1-2 fruits and vegetables available during the current season.

The target was to have a 10 percent increase in sales of Kansas-grown specialty crops at the pilot project grocery stores for 2013 over 2012. One grocery store did not experienced new sales of specialty crops because they did not buy any local produce and we found out later they truly were not on board with our project. One store had \$1,800 in sales over 2012, and another had \$1,100 in sales over 2012.

The Hiawatha Thriftway grocery store experienced the best results with an increase of \$10,500 in sales after purchasing produce from 10 different growers. They had \$900 in sales in 2012. The store hosted the farmer's market in the parking lot and buy leftover produce to sell in the store the rest of the week.

**Goal 2:** New relationships between specialty crop producers and grocery stores will be established resulting in increased Kansas specialty crops purchases. The target was ten additional relationships between the pilot project grocery stores and specialty crop producers would be reported in 2013.

The number of specialty crop producers and growers is fairly small. There is growing interest from producers and small market gardeners and the hope is sales of specialty crops will continue to increase. The grocery stores had only purchased product in 2012 from four producers. For 2013 there were a total of 12 new producer relationships with the grocery stores. A lot of those new relationships happened from one grocery store who hosted a farmer's market in their parking lot on Tuesday nights. The store then bought any leftover produce from the producers and sold in the store during the rest of the week. This turned out to be a win-win for producers and the grocery store.

**Goal 3:** Heightened consumer awareness of specialty crops, producers, and improved availability of information to locate outlets for locally raised food. The target was to increase 300 subscribers to Glacial Hills Food Center e-newsletter and 1000 unique visitors to the web site, and 250 followers on social media sites.

The E-newsletter from the Glacial Hills Food Center Kitchen Manager was sent out monthly with information that the project was doing with the grocery stores as well as cooking classes the center was hosting. It gained 155 new subscribers during the grant period.

The Kitchen Manager tried to track the number of unique visitors to the web site. This became unmanageable with problems with the website host and not being able to access the reports.

The Kitchen Manager used the tracking features on Facebook social media to monitor number of followers and site usage. This media outlet was not utilized by our customers very well. We have a higher percentage of people who are older and don't use social media. Only 75 new followers signed up.

### **Beneficiaries**

Project beneficiaries were the beginning or existing specialty crop producers with farms in the seven counties in the Glacial Hills RC&D region. With the increase in sales of specialty crop produce, and new marketing outlets the producers benefited. The cooking demonstrations and tastings benefited consumers who were educated to new and exciting possibilities of how they could prepare and cook fruits and vegetables for their families. Tastings and demonstrations for Women, Infants and Children Supplemental Nutrition program (WIC) participants were provided in the effort to enhance their nutrition knowledge and preparation skills.

The grocery stores were important beneficiaries in that they learned and realized there is increased demand for locally grown food and especially specialty items of fruits and vegetables. The stores develop relationships with farmers and growers that now allow them to continue to buy specialty crop items and offer them to their customers. The consumers are now more likely to buy these items that would not always be available for purchase as local, fresh produce.

The local economy benefited by the increase in sales of specialty crops. Demand for local, fresh, healthy produce was driven by consumers who benefited themselves, the grocery stores, and their communities.

### **Lessons Learned**

Consumers were willing to try new recipes and taste new food items prepared with specialty crop produce. Being located in the right place next to the store produce was key to getting people to stop and try new items. In two stores our location did not serve the planned purpose but the store owners were not willing to locate us closer to the produce section. One store allowed us to be right inside the door which was good visibility but people were busy getting their shopping cart and didn't always stop.

The most successful location and situation was being outside at the farmer's market in the parking lot of the Hiawatha Thriftway. As people shopped for their produce, they stopped at our taste demonstration and enjoyed sampling our items. We were a part of the excitement of the farmer's market which allowed us to be more accepted in what we were offering.

Farmers need assistance in alternative marketing avenues to gain increased sale of their product. Being involved with a grocery store is a new relationship that takes time to build and benefit from. They need help in making those connections and this project was successful with some grocery stores in making that happen.

The marketing and advertising of in-store events is important so consumers know when and where the events are happening. Stores that agree to include information about cooking and tasting demonstrations in the store promotions pieces is the best way to market. Consumers then know the time and day to come and participate in the events. The use of social media, websites and e-newsletter is still a growing trend in northeast Kansas and did not work well during this project.

Local grocery stores are vital to rural communities. These stores are part of the economy that helps sustain rural communities by providing jobs and taxes. Grocery stores can be an important source of nutrition and health by providing supplies of fresh fruits and vegetables. Rural grocery stores are community assets that attract and retain citizens. A thriving local grocery store is a sign of a healthy community.

A strategy that we found successful was for a grocery store to host the local farmer's market. We would encourage other grocery stores to consider hosting a farmer's market in their parking lot. It help drives consumer to the store and is a win-win for consumers, store owners and specialty crop producers.

### **Project Contact Information**

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