



**Indiana State Department of Agriculture  
Specialty Crop Block Grant Program Final Report  
Grant Agreement #: 12-25-G-0610**

Program Contact: Annie Schmelzer  
Program Manager for Entrepreneurship & Diversification  
One North Capitol Avenue  
Suite 600  
Indianapolis, IN. 46204  
317-234-4045  
[aschmelzer@isda.in.gov](mailto:aschmelzer@isda.in.gov)

Grant Coordinator: Amy Eizinger-Ott  
Administrative Officer & Grant Coordinator  
One North Capitol Avenue  
Suite 600  
Indianapolis, IN. 46204  
317-450-4831  
[aeizinger-ott@isda.in.gov](mailto:aeizinger-ott@isda.in.gov)

<u>Contents:</u>	
Overview	Page 2
State of the Industry	Page 2
Farmers' Market, U-Pick Agritourism	Page 3
Farmers' Market Cost Share Program	Page 5
Indiana Watermelon Growers	Page 7
Indiana Flavor Project	Page 8

## **Overview**

The overall goal of the Indiana State Department of Agriculture (ISDA) Specialty Crop Block Grant proposal was to increase market promotion and distribution among the states' specialty crop producers. These two areas go hand in hand by raising buyer awareness of locally grown products, increasing consumer knowledge, and ultimately increasing sales throughout the production season.

The Indiana State Department of Agriculture had the ability to work with various project partners to develop mechanisms to measure increased sales and consumer awareness as a result of these promotions and informational materials. As one will be able to see throughout this report these SCBG funds did have an impact on the Specialty crop industry in the state of Indiana.

## **State of the Industry**

Fruit, vegetable and other specialty crop production in Indiana is very diverse and important to Indiana's agriculture industry. Some operations specialize in intensive production of high-value crops under cover and some produce large fields of vegetables for processing. The ability to diversify and seek new markets and new product opportunities will be critical to many Indiana farms as well as the rapid change in agriculture to a consumer-driven industry creates niches and market opportunities for all of Indiana's producers – including specialty crops.

Indiana specialty crop producers have the potential to expand their marketing abilities in the coming years. Already the state has seen a huge growth in farmers markets and roadside stands. Once more publicity can be generated on where these venues are located, more customers will have easier access to fresh produce.

## **1. Indiana Farmers' Market, U-Pick and Agritourism Directory**

### Issues

This was ISDA's 1<sup>st</sup> year in developing and producing this directory of Indiana's farmers' markets, u-pick and agritourism opportunities. Since farmers' markets occur throughout the state, on various days and times, this directory contained current and detailed information of when and where these events occur. ISDA has seen a large growing interest from Indiana consumers to visit farms and buy local foods and has used this directory as a way to keep that momentum going.

### How the Issues Were Approached

During the fall of 2007, ISDA worked with Purdue Extension and the Indiana Office of Tourism Development to gather and collect information for the directory. The layout was designed in the winter and the directory went to print in the spring of 2008. Distribution of the directory to convention and visitors' bureaus around the state was eagerly received in April of 2008.

### Goals

This directory was of great benefit to Indiana's 70 farmers' markets, 35 wineries, and many other u-pick and agritourism sites. The general public was greatly assisted by this directory, which led to buying more locally grown Indiana specialty crops. The directory was listed by county and showed consumers where else in the area they could visit, making a day of their trip, instead of stopping at one place.

### Results/Progress Toward Expected Measurable Outcomes

ISDA used this program to continue to increase the public awareness of farmers' markets, u-pick and agritourism operations. To measure this, ISDA tracked the number of news articles written about Indiana Farmers' Markets in 2007 versus 2008. Using a media tracking service the department was able to count 57 news articles being published around the state about this directory and/or individual markets, wineries, u-pick stands in 2008. This number is significantly higher than the handful of new stories this area received in 2007. ISDA distributed this directory to the agriculture news and media outlets as well as some of the local TV stations as a way to show off what Indiana Agri-tourism had to offer. ISDA also evaluated the general public interest and regional interest by monitoring the depletion of these directories around the state. A total of 20,000 directories were printed and have flown off the shelves and many times ISDA was asked for another shipment to replenish a visitor center or local chamber of commerce offices supply.

### Lessons Learned

Midway through the distribution of this directory, ISDA had to request funding be reallocated in the grant to cover the cost of graphic design and shipping, in order to get these to the various visitors bureaus and chamber offices. With pre-approval from USDA leftover funds from the Farmer's Market Cost Share Program were spent on the graphic design and layout at \$6,825, additional printing expenses at \$2,304.71, and delivery expenses of \$658.21. All but \$64.55 was utilized. Therefore, ISDA will be returning \$64.55 to USDA as unspent funds under this grant. Ideally the directory still greatly benefitted the Farmer's Markets so ISDA felt this small change still accomplished the overall scope to drive consumers to Farmers' Markets

whether through the directory or the markets own advertisements. Overall ISDA was pleased with the consumer interest this directory generated and the new, broader audience of consumers we were able to reach and hopefully educate on the benefits of buying fresh and local produce. Plans are already underway for 2009 directory and a launch party to generate more attention from the media.

#### Conclusion

Numerous times throughout the year ISDA has been able to point back to and reference this directory as a resource for specialty crop producers to utilize and take advantage of. ISDA has taken advantage of our website to publicize and reference this directory and therefore has reached an audience they would not have reached otherwise. The addition of little facts about agriculture and the harvest seasons of produce have been used to continue to educate consumers on the benefits of buying local. ISDA is already at work gathering updates and revisions for next year's directory.

#### Any additional information and Examples

A PDF version of this directory can be found on ISDA's website at:  
<http://www.in.gov/isda/files/09AgDirectoryrevised.pdf>

(Remainder of this page left blank intentionally.)

## **2. Farmers' Market Cost-Share Reimbursement Program**

### Issues

ISDA implemented the Farmers' Market cost-share reimbursement program for the 1<sup>st</sup> time, due to SCBG funds. This program provided grants to Indiana farmers' markets by reimbursing 50% of the cost of farmers' market advertising, displays and promotional materials, up to \$500.

### How the Issues Were Approached

During the first few months of 2008, ISDA advertised the details of the reimbursement program. ISDA continued to promote the program at the annual farmers' market workshops sponsored by Purdue Extension and the Indiana Cooperative Development Council as well as running news releases, e-mail blasts and utilizing ISDA's website to ensure the word was getting out about this program.

### Goals

ISDA expected this program to increase consumer awareness of Indiana Farmers' Markets causing them to experience an increased visitation and the overall growth of farmers' markets. With this new funding source, ISDA polled the participating markets at the start of the spring market season and again in the late summer and found attendance to increase by at least 10%. ISDA did attend several farmers' markets and was able to view and count the attendance numbers as well as other markets sending us their count totals. Indiana also saw an addition of 10 new markets around the state which was a 5% increase on the previous year.

### Results/Progress Toward Expected Measurable Outcomes

The cost-share reimbursement program awarded \$15,147.53 to 25 farmers' markets around the state allowing them to promote their market. Farmers' markets in Indiana provided a source of venue for over 2,000 Hoosier producers. The increase in promotion added to the traffic flow and the venue of these farms. Several times throughout the market season ISDA heard that markets were afraid that the downturn in the economy might decrease consumer interest, but this was not the case and all of our participating farmers' markets were very appreciative of the financial assistance.

### Lessons Learned

ISDA found for the first year of this program some of the smaller less or newer markets to be a bit skeptical to participate or unable to provide proof need to generate the reimbursement (receipts, invoices, etc.) Some markets are not as well organized as others, but after the first round some of the unorganized markets saw where neighboring farmers' markets were making purchases and then receiving reimbursements and are planning on participating in the program next year, which will be funded by another round of SCBG funds. ISDA is anticipating a much greater response to this program in 2009.

### Conclusion

To continue this momentum of buying local, ISDA is very pleased with the increase in consumer awareness and overall appeal of Indiana farmers' markets, ISDA will continue this cost-share reimbursement program again next year with SCBG funds from our 2008 grant.

ISDA also believes that this program compliments the Agritourism Directory nicely, with both working to support the specialty crop producers in this state.

Any additional information and Examples

The following 25 Farmers' Markets received funding:

Avon-Washington Twp. Comm. Park F.M.  
Binford Farmers Market  
Bluffton Farmers' Market  
Broad Ripple Farmers' Market  
Carmel Farmers' Market  
Chesterton's European Market  
City of Bloomington Farmers Market  
City of Columbus Farmers Market  
Community F.M. of Owen County  
Fishers' Farmer's Market  
Fulton County Famers Market  
Geist Farmers' Market  
Harrison Co. Farmers Market  
Kokomo Farmers' Market Corp.  
Madison Farmers' Market  
F. M. on Mainstreet Shelbyville Inc.  
Market on Morris (Mary Rigg)  
Minnetrista Farmers' Market  
Monroe County Growers Assn. Market  
Oxford-Town Sq. Farmers' Market  
Seymour Farmers' Market  
Town of Highland Farmers Market  
Traders Point Farmers Market  
Valparaiso Community Farmers Market  
Vincennes Farmers' Market

(Remainder of this page left blank intentionally.)

### **3. Indiana Watermelon Growers**

#### Issues

The National Agriculture Statistics Service ranks Indiana fifth in the nation for watermelon production. Indiana's watermelon growers have sold in local and regional retail stores successfully in the past. In order to expand their sales and develop new markets they exhibited at the Produce Marketing Association Show. Funds from this grant paid for booth space for the Indiana Watermelon Growers Association and provided them with an opportunity to increase their exposure and sales opportunities.

#### How the Issues Were Approached

ISDA worked closely with the Watermelon Growers to ensure the best use of booth space, sign placement, messaging, advertising, and general overall market appeal for their group and product.

#### Goals

Participating for the first time at the Produce Marketing Association Fresh Summit gave Indiana watermelon grower access to 17,000 produce and floral buyers they would not have been able to reach otherwise.

#### Results/Progress Toward Expected Measurable Outcomes

A presence at PMA allowed the watermelon growers to increase in gross sales equal to \$175 per trailer load for each additional load of watermelons sold to retailers. This information was provided to ISDA by the Watermelon Growers Association who polled their members. This information also showed an increased amount of watermelon sales to direct retailers by 8 % surpassing ISDA's original goal of 5%.

Participating at the Produce Marketing Association Fresh Summit gave Indiana watermelon grower access to 17,000 produce and floral buyers.

#### Lessons Learned

Booth space was purchased in the spring of 2008 for the October show. ISDA staff worked with the watermelon growers association to ensure their booth space was utilized in an informative and marketable manner. Thanks to the financing from this grant the booth was paid for in full in prior to the October show.

#### Conclusion

Overall both ISDA and the Watermelon Growers Association were pleased with the partnership created by this project, the exposure to their product, and the increase in sales that resulted as an outcome.

#### Any additional information and Examples

N/A

(Remainder of this page left blank intentionally.)

## 4. Indiana Flavor Project

### Issues

The Indiana Flavor program was developed in response to the growing interest in local foods in many Indiana communities. Several factors have been driving this interest including (1) increased numbers of producers growing specialty crops, (2) an increased demand from consumers for local food products, (3) increased opportunities for the procurement of local foods from institutions such as school corporations, universities, and hospitals, and (4) a surge of entrepreneurs engaging in new food-related ventures.

In most communities where these activities begin to occur, they often stall out or are less effective than they could be. This can be attributed to a variety of reasons that usually related to one or both of the following root causes: (1) inadequate early involvement from the right regional stakeholders or (2) jumping to a solution (i.e., distribution center, shared-use kitchen, etc.) before having fully developed a holistic, asset-based, information-driven, implementable action plan.

Purdue Extension and the Purdue Center for Regional Development (PCRD), with support from the Indiana State Department of Agriculture (ISDA), piloted the *Indiana Flavor* program in Jackson County, Indiana and then conducted a statewide training session to equip others to use the concepts and tools in their own communities.

### How Issues Were Approached

Working with a core group of stakeholders in Jackson County, Purdue staff facilitated the *Indiana Flavor* program and assisted the group in launching a local-food related initiative. The process included asset identification, priority development, network building, and strategic doing to move quickly from idea to implementation.

Jackson County chose to focus on the development of a maple syrup festival. 2008 was the first year for the festival and the community decided that the growth of this festival could be an effect way to increase awareness of locally produced syrup. This focused effort resulted in a 200% growth in the number of 2009 festival attendees and a 2009 partnership with Clabber Girl and a 2010 partnership with Vermont-based King Arthur Flour Company. These well-recognized brands and the national marketing of the festival brought tremendous national attention to Indiana and Jackson County as a producer of maple syrup and the home for the festival. Jackson County syrup producer, Tim Burton, has seen significant sales growth and credits the *Indiana Flavor* program in helping him expand his market.

### Goals

On August 27, 2009 a full-day workshop was conducted in Noblesville, Indiana to train others on the Indiana Flavor model and to use the tools developed in the pilot. Fourteen individuals attended the training. The following is an excerpt from the promotional flier.

*Indiana Flavor is a "community development" approach that provides tools to help create communities where local foods-related projects can be successful. Attendees will learn: (1) how the local food economy works, (2) how to identify and engage stakeholders, (2) how to creatively link and leverage assets, (3) how to use open innovation to identify potential projects, and (4) how to use "strategic doing" to quickly implement projects. The afternoon will feature a panel discussion with Tim Burton of The National Maple Syrup Festival and the Roy Ballard who helps support the Hancock Harvest Council. Indiana Flavor was*

*developed by Purdue Extension Economic and Community Development with funding support from the Indiana State Department of Agriculture.*

In addition to the initial training, several other workshops have been conducted including sessions at the *Growing for Market* program, a statewide symposium on "Environmental and Policy Approaches to Promoting Healthy Eating and Physical Activity in Indiana Communities," and the upcoming *Midwest Women in Agriculture* conference.

#### Results/Progress Toward Expected Measurable Outcomes

The training materials currently reside online at <http://pcrd.typepad.com/ecd/indiana-flavor/>. This web address has been provided to all of those attending training and is now being utilized in several communities. Six workshops were held with an average attendance of 8-16 people at each. All were fully trained and given the necessary tool kit. This surpassed ISDA's original goal of 8 people. The following resources are available online:

##### *Presentation Materials*

The presentation materials entitled, *Indiana Flavor: Creating Community-Based Food Networks*, provides resources to help facilitators: (1) Make the case local/regional food systems, (2) Help others understand how the local food economy works, (3) How to effectively link and leverage assets to create a local/regional food network, (4) How to use open innovation to identify food network projects, and (5) how to use strategic doing to quickly implement projects.

##### *Understanding the Local Food Economy*

The concept of a "local" food economy may not be immediately understood by everyone. This simple graphic, adapted from the work of Ed Morrison and David Morganthaler, describes the three different types of money that flows into, out of, and within a community.

##### *Stakeholder Matrix*

This is a useful tool to help identify the various interests that need to be represented in a community-based local foods project.

##### *Sample Survey Questions*

Survey questions for several audiences are provided. These surveys can be helpful in prioritizing local foods-related projects. Survey questions are available for five groups: (1) farmers and growers, (2) restaurants, (3) retailers, (4) institutions, and (5) consumers.

##### *Examples of Community-Based Food Network Projects*

This is an inventory of seven different best practices from both Indiana and elsewhere in the U.S. These examples are helpful in getting local groups to see the possibilities of what can be done in their own community.

##### *Effectiveness vs. Complexity Matrix*

This is a helpful tool to help groups determine both how effective and complex a proposed local foods project will be. Eight different types of projects are plotted on the matrix including (1) policy mandates, (2) joint marketing initiatives, (3) the creation of food directories, (4) food festivals, (5) farmers' markets, (6) educational projects, (7) branding initiatives, and (8) new infrastructure. This tool is adapted from the *Local Foodcheck Handbook*, Action for Market Towns, Suffolk, England.

### Lessons Learned

Sadly, Purdue was unable to utilize all of the funding they were awarded. Therefore \$2,901.72 was returned to ISDA and will in turn we sent back to ISDA.

### Conclusion

Purdue Extension is committed to continuing to support the *Indiana Flavor* program with additional training and providing technical assistance to communities. In addition, the Indiana Flavor materials are being utilized throughout the Midwest and will soon be part of a broader Sustainable Communities curriculum being developed by the *North Central Regional Center for Rural Development* at Michigan State University.

### Any additional information and Examples

Training materials can be viewed online at <http://pcrd.typepad.com/ecd/indiana-flavor/>.

(Remainder of this page left blank intentionally.)