



Final Report
Specialty Crop Block Grant Program
Kansas Department of Agriculture
USDA AMS Agreement Number: 12-25-B-0620
January 30, 2011

Program Contact

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Research and Extension in Support of Kansas Sweet Potato Industry

Kansas State University
Grant Awarded: \$20,000

Introduction

Kansas was once a major producer of sweet potatoes, but production declined along with other food crops over time. This project aimed to strengthen opportunities for sweet potato production and marketing in Kansas.

The project team built a seed program to help ensure that there would be enough seeds of certain preferred cultivars, and developed publications on production guidelines and budgets for organic and conventional sweet potatoes. These steps were taken to meet a local demand for conventional sweet potatoes and national and international demands for organic sweet potatoes.

Project Approach

A certified organic sweet potato seed program was started at the John C. Pair Horticulture Research Center in Haysville, Kan. This program was started to serve producers in Kansas and surrounding areas. Organic and conventional sweet potato storage roots were bedded in the field to produce planting material, or slips, for sale to producers and for the group's own seed multiplication and research plots. The sweet potatoes were planted with special tractor-drawn implements purchased under the project.

Goals Achieved

A seed program supplying high quality organic sweet potato slips to both organic and conventional producers in Kansas was established and has continued past the end of the project. As a result, there is little doubt that sweet potato production in Kansas has increased and that producers are getting better production from the area planted.

The project team estimated that the acreage of the crop would double in one year, assisted by the addition of 20 new sweet potato growers. According to the USDA's Census of Agriculture, the number of Kansas farms producing sweet potatoes increased from 17 in 2002 to 36 in 2007. The number of sweet potato acres grew from 29 in 2002 to 49 in 2007. The project team did not conduct an official survey, but believe the project has contributed to an increase in both producers and acres.

In 2008 - the first year slips were shipped to buyers - about 113,000 slips were mailed, accounting for about 9 acres. In 2011, the program has orders for about 136,000 slips, accounting for about 11 acres.

It should be noted, however, that three buyers making large orders accounted for 90,000 of the 113,000 slips in 2008. The program could not accommodate those large orders; the buyers understood and found alternate sources.

The program saw a significant jump in the overall number of buyers between 2008 and 2011. There were 33 individuals who purchased slips in 2008, compared to 77 in 2011.

Results and Conclusions

This support of Kansas sweet potato growers came at an opportune moment, as the popularity of sweet potatoes have increased nationwide based on recognition of its nutritional value. Kansas was once an important producer of sweet potatoes. As a result of this project, sweet potatoes have increased in

importance among the diversity of crops grown by vegetable producers in Kansas who direct market their crops.

The online order form has a space for comments. They are learning that growers appreciate their products. As an example:

"Thanks for these nice slips - we had a very good yield of top quality potatoes in 2010 and our customers raved about the flavor!"

"Thank you. I was going to try to start my own this year, and still will try a few to learn and from my best plants. To have organically grown slips available, and at this price, is a real blessing."

"Thanks for providing us with an organic product at a reasonable price. Also ordering was very easy to do."

"The slips I got last year did great! I hope you can keep providing this service for a long time."

Progress on Long-Term Outcome Measures

The horticultural research center has continued the project after the project director moved to Ghana. This year, they have taken the system online and farmers are now ordering their sweet potato seed (slips) via the web. This has greatly reduced the staff's bookkeeping time. As of February 2011, the center has had orders for 98,000 slips from 16 states.

Additional Information

See attached.

Contact

Kansas State University
John C. Pair Horticulture Center
1901 E. 95th St. South
Haysville, KS 67060
(316) 788-3844

2011 Organic Sweetpotato Slips

K-State John C Pair Horticulture Center, Haysville, KS

We are planning to have sweetpotato slips available from the week of June 1st onward.

Minimum quantity of 500 slips @ \$75.00

Quantities of 1000 slips and up @ \$85.00 per 1000.

Slips may be picked up at Haysville (south of Wichita) or shipped to you at no additional charge.

Orders will be filled in the order they are received

Available Cultivars

Beauregard (Standard sweetpotato)

NC Japanese (Purple skin/white flesh)

O'Henry (White skin/white flesh)

Number of Slips Needed to Plant One Acre at 12" spacing	
Row Width (in)	Plants per Acre
40	13,100
42	12,500
44	11,900

****New This Year****

Orders may be placed online at: www.hfrr.ksu.edu/DesktopDefault.aspx?tabid=630

OR

Place your order with:

Tami Myers

John C. Pair Horticulture Center,

1901 E. 95th St. South Haysville, KS 67060

E-mail: tamyers@ksu.edu

Tel: 316-788-0492

Fax: 316-788-3844

A copy of our organic certification will be provided with your PAID Receipt.

2011 Organic Sweetpotato Seed Order

K-State Research and Extension

John C. Pair Horticulture Center 1901 E. 95th St. South Haysville, KS 67060

Name: _____

Address: _____

City, State Zip code: _____

Telephone/email: _____

<u>Cultivar</u>	<u># of Slips</u>	<u>Cost</u>
Beauregard	_____	_____
NC Japanese	_____	_____
O'Henry	_____	_____
Total	_____	_____

Please Check One Box

Ship to above address

Pick-up in Haysville

Payments due upon receipt of invoice. Make checks payable to Kansas State University and send to Tami Myers, John C. Pair Horticulture Center, 1901 E. 95th St. South Haysville, KS 67060.

Extension Demonstration in Support of Scaling Up Mechanization for Kansas Vegetable Production

Kansas State University
Grant Awarded: \$17,600

Introduction

This project attempted to strengthen market farming efforts in Kansas through the demonstration of labor saving implements that have been shown to significantly increase efficiency of vegetable production efforts elsewhere.

Project Approach

Project staff members bought several pieces of equipment for this project, including a flex tine weeder, a killer rotavator, and poly for their monster Haygrove high tunnel. This equipment was incorporated into the array of tools and implements used in the food crops research and extension operations at the K-State Horticulture Research and Extension Center in Olathe, Kan.

The project contributed to implementation of normal extension programming. Throughout the growing season each year, a range of formal training, short courses, field days and individual visits was conducted under various programs, projects and initiatives, including the Growing Growers Training Program, and the Sustainable Market Farming Certificate program offered to students at Johnson County Community College. Under the Growing Growers Training Program, equipment short courses were offered each year at the Research and Extension Center and included introduction to all equipment there, ranging from hand tools (wheel hoes, etc) to small motorized implements, and larger tractor implements. These were generally discussed and demonstrated within the context of the high tunnel production research ongoing at the Center.

The Sustainable Market Farming Certificate Program gave students the opportunity for more in-depth understanding of use of equipment for scaling-up, during the hours of hand-on experience they received during the practicums under the course.

Goals Achieved

Visitors to the center were exposed to the equipment during the center's field days, during which the theme of scaling up was directly addressed, and also had the opportunity to see the ways that these contributed to the efficiency of the program's research efforts.

A survey was proposed to measure producer awareness of options for improving production efficiency. However, project staff did not administer this survey.

Results and Conclusions

The challenges of scaling up vegetable production in the risk-prone production environment of the central Great Plains are large. However, high tunnels do appear to be an exceptionally appropriate and scaleable crop protection technology with significant promise and advantages in almost all production zones.

Progress on Long-Term Outcome Measures

The horticultural research center has not continued the project after the project director moved to Ghana; however, the addition of basic equipment at the K-State Horticulture Research and Extension

Center provides long-term infrastructure that can be used to assist with further research and extension in Kansas. These assets are instrumental to gain leverage when applying for larger, competitive grants (e.g. NIFA-OREI), and will add to the success of local market farmers in Kansas.

Additional Information

Not applicable.

Contact

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Fruit and Vegetable Extension Specialist

Kansas State University Horticulture Research and Extension Center

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Olathe, KS 66061

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Student Farm Teaches Sustainable Farming and Business Skills

Kansas State University

Grant Awarded: \$19,993

Introduction

In 2007, Kansas produced between 5 percent and 10 percent of its produce needs. Few of the state's post-secondary horticulture students were choosing the production option for their studies. The horticulture department of Kansas State University sought funds to start a working student farm to encourage students to gain experience in research, business planning and practical growing techniques.

Project Approach

The project team identified a farm site and a memorandum of understanding signed for use of the farm for five years, with an option to renew in the future. A student farm manager was hired and a student farm club was formed to help with publicity and special events. A tractor and plow were also available for the project.

The farm manager conducted an inventory of equipment and purchased seeds and supplies. Four interns were hired and more than 10 students served as volunteers through the student club. A farmers market was established on the University's main campus, drawing attention to the program and to the local fruits and vegetables available in the community. Students involved in the project had hands-on experience in growing vegetable crops, fruit crops, sustainable agriculture and in managing a greenhouse.

Goals Achieved

The main purpose of establishing the student farm was to provide opportunities for students to learn about different aspects of fruit and vegetable production. That has been achieved. The production program has more of a presence even within the University's horticulture department. A separate source of money funded a picnic table and a canopy to make the farm more comfortable for those who are visiting. Because of the project's success, the number of students who choose fruit and vegetable production has jumped from three to more than 10 after three years.

A secondary goal was to improve research on fruit and vegetable production in Kansas. Five classes in fruit and vegetable production, sustainable and organic agriculture and greenhouse management now use the farm for their labs. Local garden clubs and master gardeners also visit the farm for programs and events. Other University-related clubs, such as a student nutrition club, also have visited the farm.

The on-campus farmers market has provided a presence for local fruits and vegetables that was previously missing. Outreach efforts included an event promoting fruit and vegetable consumption to prevent cancer. Newspaper articles in the campus newspaper promote the market, particularly to incoming freshmen. The outreach appears to be successful. The student farm club has about 15 members, and only four are horticulture majors.

Results and Conclusions

The results from this project were positive in terms of taking first steps. The student farm is now a part of virtually all grant applications.

The group set up a system of 30 cropping beds on two acres, including cover crops. Students learned about various lessons about farming, including the amount of labor it takes to run a farm.

The group spent about \$30,000 on manager and intern labor, and only received \$3,000 in gross sales in the first year. By the third year, the farm grossed \$10,000 in sales; however, it is still spending more than it is bringing in.

Expanding the program's visibility has attracted new members who weren't already enrolled in horticulture studies and built new cross-discipline relationships. Three students from architecture and engineering have written an EPA grant to design and build a sustainable structure at the student farm and create a water harvesting system.

Progress on Long-Term Outcome Measures

This grant made possible the first year of experience for improving fruit and vegetable production in Kansas. Additional grants built on this project and focused on barriers to local food purchases and added mushroom production to the farm. The farm will continue into its fourth year and beyond and continue to establish linkages to regional farms and other classes and groups at the University.

Student farm alumni are in the community now in places that are also supporting local fruits and vegetables. The farm manager from the project's first year is now the produce buyer/manager at the local food co-op in Manhattan. The farm manager from the second year has graduated and moved to central Kansas, where he is starting a mushroom production and community outreach program. The other two farm managers are graduating this spring, and one will likely go on to graduate school in the area of vegetable crops.

Additional Information

More information about the Kansas State University's student farm is available on the following website: <http://www.hfrr.ksu.edu/p.aspx?tabid=960>

Contact

Rhonda Janke
Kansas State University Department of Horticulture, Forestry, and Recreation Resources
2021 Throckmorton Plant Science Center
Manhattan, KS
(785) 532-6170
rrjanke@ksu.edu

Development of a Regional Direct Market Farm Guide and Website

K-State Research and Extension – Douglas County

Grant Awarded: \$5,500

Introduction

To help consumers connect with local specialty crop producers, the Lawrence Area Horticulture Producers' Association (LAHPA) compiles a directory of its members each year. The directory has been printed since 1985 and is well-known by local food supporters, but as the number of area producers increased, so did the size of the guide and the costs for printing. Since its inception, costs of printing the guide were shared by LAHPA members so that the guide could be a free resource to consumers.

Printing of a detailed guide finally became cost prohibitive for the members. Believing in the importance of helping to connect producers and consumers, LAHPA chose to carry on the longtime tradition of printing the guide but produced a smaller, simpler guide. Unfortunately, the smaller guide did not have enough space to tell consumers much about the specialty crops and value-added products available from area farms.

LAHPA then sought to develop a website (www.growinglawrence.org) where members could maintain a complete listing of the crops and products available on their farm. This would offer the opportunity to continue to produce a printed guide that would be attractive to their traditional audience, but also offer an extensive listing for visitors to the website. Annual hosting and domain name fees for the site would be less than the cost of producing an extensive printed guide.

LAHPA hoped that the website may also reach consumers who might not pick up or be aware of the printed guides and would potentially reduce paper waste as fewer, smaller guides are produced.

Project Approach

The project was to build a directory website that could contain all of the information contained in older versions of the LAHPA printed directory. A smaller, simplified version of the old guide could still be produced at a lower cost and could be used to direct consumers to the website for more information.

Creation of the directory website would continue to allow consumers to gain awareness of the local specialty crops available to them.

Goals Achieved

The website allowed producers to provide detailed lists of their products to consumers without incurring excessive printing costs. The website and simplified printed directory are a means to connect consumers directly with producers.

Results and Conclusions

Measuring the number of consumers whose awareness of specialty crops has risen because of the website is a difficult task. LAHPA and K-State Research and Extension – Douglas County (KSRE) are using a tracking program to monitor website traffic and know that since the website went online in July 2008, it has had more than 13,000 page views (period ending December 31, 2009). The average visitor is spending about 3.5 minutes on the site.

LAHPA produced a coupon (see attachments) that could be printed from the website, in hopes of tracking customers who learned about their farms on the new LAHPA website. Unfortunately, the coupons were not used.

LAHPA also hoped to increase the number of farmers listed in the directory and on the website. Although some new farms have joined, the same number of farms left the association during the grant period. The producers who have left the association have quit farming, but despite the loss of these producers, the number of specialty crop producers listed in the directory remains constant.

LAHPA provided information about marketing to their association at their meeting in January 2009, in order to help the farmers develop new ways to sell their product, new value-added products, new products, and more appealing presentation styles. LAHPA hoped that the online directory (with more detail about individual farms' products) would build awareness amongst their member farms about what other farms were doing and about the potential for new products. In a survey of member farms in Fall 2009 (54 percent of member farms responding), 60 percent of farms reported both developing new ways to sell their product and that they had started growing or selling a new product. Fifty-two percent reported changing their presentation style, and 48 percent reported developing a new value-added product.

Finally, the association planned to count foot traffic through the Downtown Lawrence Farmers' Market, but LAHPA and KSRE ultimately decided that this was not an accurate reflection of the effectiveness of the producer directory. Although many of producers in the directory also sell at the Downtown Lawrence Farmers' Market, some LAHPA producers only sell directly from their farms or through other venues. There are also several non-LAHPA members who are vendors at that particular market.

Progress on Long-Term Outcome Measures

Creating a website that was user-friendly and also contained a large amount of detailed information about each of the farms was more complicated than anticipated, but LAHPA and KSRE believe the end product is a presentable user-friendly, easily searchable directory. The online directory allows farms to list more information about their farms than they possibly could with a printed guide, and allows users to link to maps, individual farm websites, and additional information.

The simplified printed directory is still an important resource for individuals without internet access and serves as a tool to direct consumers with web access to the additional information that is contained on the website.

Both the website and the simplified printed directory are valuable resources that connect consumers with local specialty crop producers.

Additional Information

See following pages.

Contact

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smithjen@ksu.edu



...fruits, vegetables, meat, dairy, greenhouses, Christmas trees, pumpkin patches, and more!

This publication is updated in the spring of each year. For an updated copy, or more information, please contact Douglas County Extension Office Douglas County 4-H Fairgrounds 2110 Harper St Lawrence KS 66046 785-843-7058 www.douglas.ksu.edu



www.growinglawrence.org

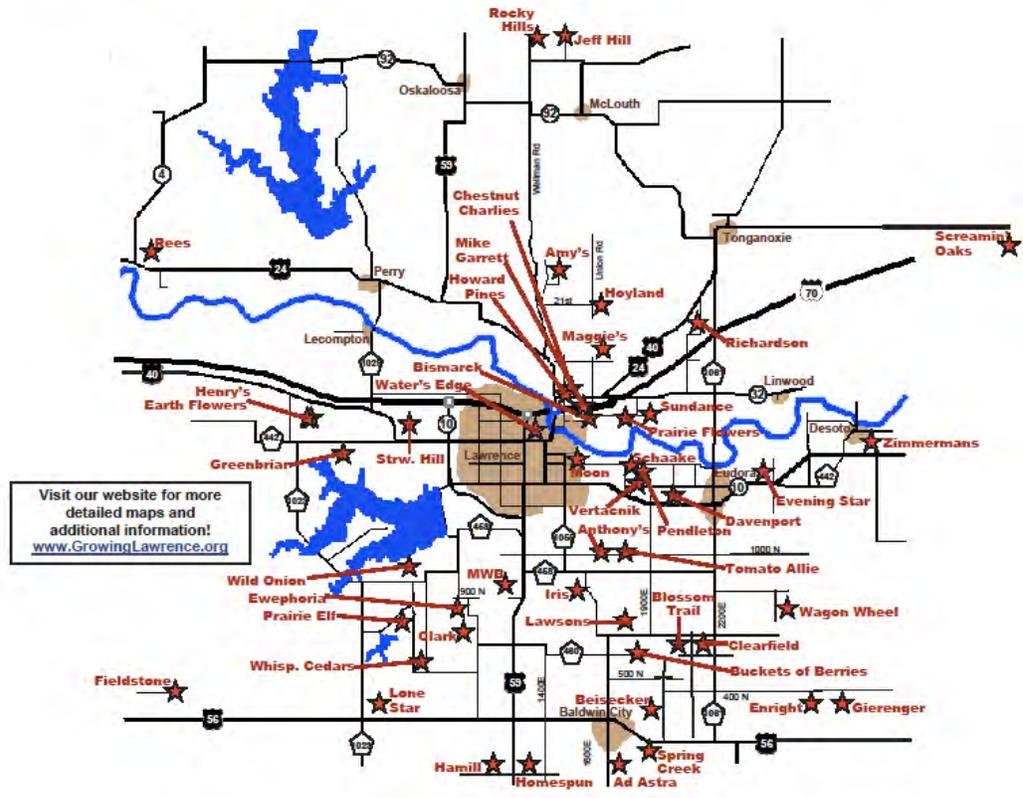
Growing Lawrence is a publication of the Lawrence Area Horticulture Producers Association and represents its members and associate members. While we strive to be as inclusive as possible, this is not a complete listing of all producers in this area. For more information, please visit our website: www.growinglawrence.org

Visit our website: www.GrowingLawrence.org

Finally, we've seen so many people enjoy the experience of visiting our local farms. It's a great family adventure and good clean educational fun.

There's just something satisfying about knowing exactly where your food comes from.

Growing Lawrence is an effort to conveniently connect you to local and fresh produce. Buying local supports the local economy and it's not hard to imagine the many environmental benefits.



Visit our website for more detailed maps and additional information! www.GrowingLawrence.org

...fruits, vegetables, greenhouses, Christmas trees, pumpkin patches, meat, dairy, and more!

growing lawrence
connecting you to fresh & local...

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www.growinglawrence.org

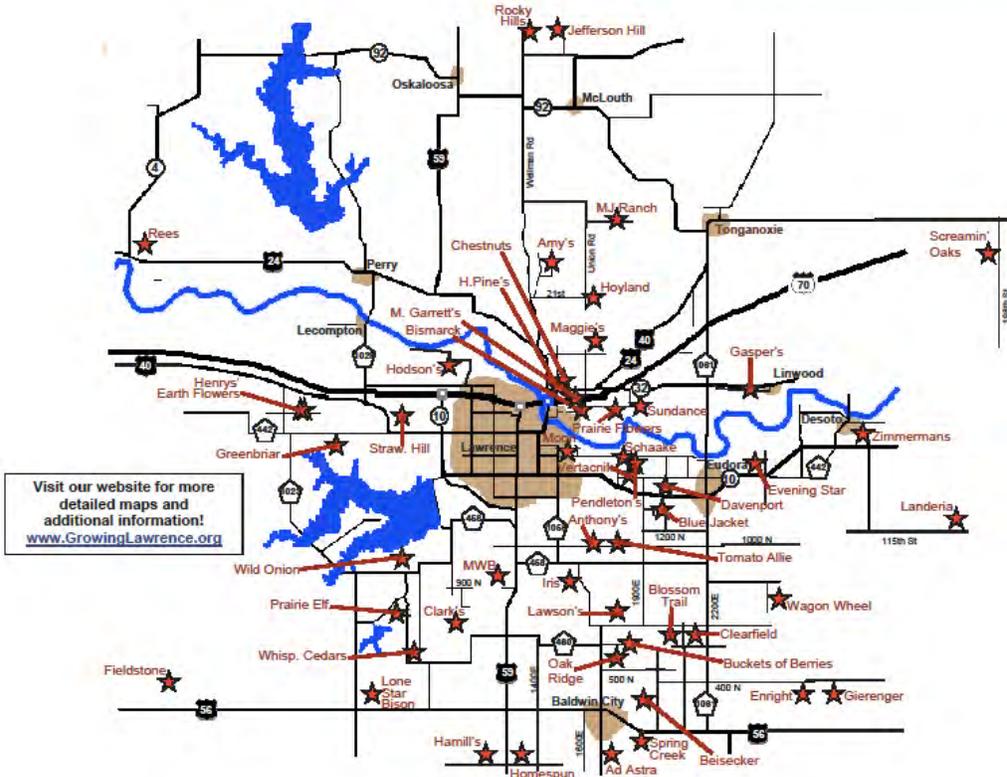
Growing Lawrence is a publication of the Lawrence Area Horticulture Producers Association and represents its members and associate members. While we strive to be as inclusive as possible, this is not a complete listing of all producers in this area.



Visit:
www.GrowingLawrence.org
for more detailed information!



Come experience local farms!
The Lawrence area offers an abundance of sights, tastes, and tradition all in one great place!
Browse through the directory or visit our website for detailed information about each farm.
Find local products as well as fun and educational activities for your family, school, social group, or business.
When you plan your farm visits, please note and respect published hours and requests for appointments.





Please note: This is a special promotion of the Lawrence Area Horticulture Producers' Association in cooperation with the Downtown Lawrence Farmers' Market. *Although many of the DLFM vendors are members, some are not. Also, not all of the LAHPA members are DLFM vendors.* We apologize for any inconvenience this may cause.

2009 Lawrence Area Horticulture Association members and associate members:

- | | | |
|---|--------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Ad Astra Alpacas | Gasper Family Farm | Prairie Elf Christmas Trees |
| Amy's Meats | Gieringers Orchard | Prairie Flowers |
| Anthony's Beehive | Greenbriar Farm | Rees Fruit Farm |
| Beisecker Farms | Hamill's Country Garden | Rocky Hills Elk Ranch Inc. |
| Bismarck Gardens | Greenhouse | Schaake's Pumpkin Patch |
| Blossom Trail Bee Ranch | Hodson Farms | Screamn' Oaks Farm |
| Blue Jacket Crossing Vineyard & Winery | Homespun Hill Farm | Spring Creek Farm |
| Buckets of Berries/Vesecky | Howard Pine's Garden Center | Strawberry Hill Christmas Tree Farm |
| Family Farms | Hoyland Farm | Sundance Emu Ranch |
| Chestnut Charlie's Organic | Jefferson Hill Farm and Winery | The Henrys' Plant Farm |
| Tree Crops | Landeria Farm | The Iris Place |
| Clark Family Farm | Lawson Brothers Farm | Tomato Allie |
| Clearfield Farm | Lone Star Bison Ranch | Vertacnik Orchard |
| Davenport Orchard, Vineyard, and Winery | Maggie's Farm | Wagon Wheel Orchard |
| Earth Flowers | Mike Garrett Farms | Whispering Cedars |
| Enright Gardens | MJ Ranch | Wild Onion Farm |
| Evening Star Pines | Moon on the Meadow | Zimmermans Kill Creek Farm |
| Fieldstone | MWB Produce | |
| | Oak Ridge Farm | |
| | Pendleton's Country Market | |

Downtown Lawrence Farmers' Market

Saturday Market
7-11 am
824 New Hampshire Street

Weekday Markets
Tuesday & Thursday
4-6 pm
1020 Vermont Street

Promotion of Specialty Crops at Kansas Farmers Markets

Kansas Rural Center

Grant Awarded: \$12,000

Introduction

The growth in consumer demand for fresh produce and new specialty crops stimulates the growth of farmers markets. Farmers markets often serve as the entry level for farmers to test alternative marketing strategies and new specialty crop products. Farmers markets also serve as a cooperative farmer business incubator. These markets enable farmers to increase sales and transfer production and marketing information among the farmer vendors.

Project Approach

The Kansas Rural Center worked with 11 farmers markets to facilitate the development of business plans for each market. As part of the planning, the markets developed a simple promotion plan and a budget to stimulate the growth of specialty crop sales.

The Kansas Rural Center developed partnerships with the Kansas Department of Agriculture, the Kansas Department of Commerce and Kansas State University during the project.

Goals Achieved

All 11 markets developed business plans. The rural center facilitated the process by hosting business planning workshops. These workshops educated market managers on consumer research, successful markets, and other business planning tools. Informational handouts covered food safety, business planning, market management, and market promotional ideas and strategies. Each market submitted a market promotion plan and a \$1,000 budget, which was approved by an oversight committee. Each market reported back on outcomes during the market season.

The markets then received \$1,000 for promotion strategies from the rural center, having met the following requirements:

- The market had a sponsoring organization, management team or board that provided management and oversight of the market;
- The market staff participated in a business planning workshop facilitated by the Kansas Rural Center;
- The market had a checking account and means of accounting for grant expenses;
- The market signed a contract with the rural center specifying the terms of agreement for the grant; and
- The market reported back to the rural center to fulfill the project's outcomes.

Marketing strategies implemented through this project included paid radio and newspaper advertising; free radio promotions, newspaper articles and photographs featuring the market; market coupons; free samples; signs; food demonstrations; tent canopies; display tables; fliers; refrigerator magnets; canvas tote bags; t-shirts; partnerships with local businesses and chambers of commerce; websites; drawings; special events and newsletters.

Results and Conclusions

As a result of this project, the rural center's grants made possible the promotion of the 11 markets and the specialty crops of cut flowers, garlic, ginger root, herbs, honey, lavender, mushrooms, potatoes and sweet corn. The project increased, on average, sales by 25 percent and customer attendance by 22 percent at each market.

All of the participating markets introduced at least one new specialty crop for sale. These new specialty crops included peaches, apples, cantaloupe, beets and beet greens, burpless cucumbers, black walnuts, ornamental plants, cilantro, thyme, tarragon, pears, chives, basil, oregano, mint, grapes, heirloom tomatoes, cherries, perennial flowers, parsley, honey, blackberries, squash, potted flowers, garlic, dill, varied winter squash, pecans, zinnias, lavender, gourds, spearmint, sweet corn, apricots, black currants, Shiro plums, Italian broad beans, kale, kohlrabi, parsnips, turnips and turnip greens, strawberries, sapling trees, white sweet potatoes, okra, pumpkins, cockscomb, fall hearty mums, broom corn, sage, potted herbs, paw paws, and strawberry leather.

Farmers markets, especially smaller markets, are often isolated from their peer organizations. Networking opportunities and facilitated planning workshops help markets learn best management practices and gather new ideas for market promotion. Individual farmers learn about new specialty crops from other growers and can test-market these crops directly with consumers. Through education, these farmers can learn how to promote these new specialty crops to consumers.

Progress on Long-Term Outcome Measures

The 11 markets, plus others, have developed business plans through 17 facilitated business planning workshops. At the time of the project, there were 75 farmers markets in the state. The 11 markets are still in existence and we now have 101 organized farmers markets in the state.

Since the completion of project activities in Nov. 2008, there have been two complete growing seasons at all the selected markets. Those seasons have been marked by great enthusiasm for farmers markets all across the state.

There has been no further funding for data collection since the completion of the grant, however, it is safe to say that sales have increased at all markets due to increased numbers of vendors, increased use of EBT at some markets, increased market hours and lengthened seasons at some markets, and increased societal interest in local and fresh foods. However, these numbers cannot be quantified because there is no mechanism or funding in place to do so. Additionally, the project director is no longer with the Kansas Rural Center.

The project was successful and contributed to a new positive attitude throughout the state concerning locally grown foods and specialty crops.

Additional Information

See attached.

Contact

Dan Nagengast
Kansas Rural Center
304 Pratt St.
Whiting, KS 66552
nagengast@earthlink.net

Sustainable Food System Projects

The Rural Center supports a number of projects designed to move agriculture towards local and regional food systems that emphasize community, nearby markets, and the self-generation of local economies through farmer and processor livelihoods, all based on sustainable farming practices.



Farmers' Market Nutrition Programs

Coordinator: Dan Nagengast, dan@kansasruralcenter.org

KRC has organized a broad coalition of horticultural producers, churches, social service agencies, child and nutrition advocates and hunger advocates to try and establish two different farmers' market nutrition projects. The Department on Aging successfully completed the third year of the Seniors Farmers' Market Nutrition Program in the summer of 2005, providing seniors with coupons redeemable for fresh produce at markets. KRC continues to advocate for a similar WIC program for nutritionally at-risk mothers with infants

and small children..

Grow Your Farmers' Market Project

Coordinator: Mercedes Taylor-Puckett, mercedes.taylorpuckett@gmail.com or 785-840-6202

Farmers' markets have grown dramatically across Kansas. Farmers' markets serve many functions including helping farmers' incubate new enterprises and value-added products. Farmers' markets are businesses. Like any other business, farmers' markets will benefit from business planning.

KRC provides a free facilitation service guiding farmers' markets in developing a business plan. The Wallace Genetic Foundation funds the "Grow Your Farmers' Market" project.



You may download a descriptive brochure by clicking on this link.

[Kansas Farmers Markets.com](http://www.kansasfarmersmarkets.com) - A wealth of information on the 75+ farmers markets in our state.

[Rules, Regulations and Resources for Farmers Markets in Kansas](#) - Updated February 2009

You can also download a publication written by the Kansas Rural Center on "Starting a Seasonal Open-Air Market in Kansas" at <http://www.oznet.ksu.edu/library/hort2/s140.pdf> (678K PDF file)

Kansas State University maintains a directory of Kansas Farmers' Markets at: <http://www.oznet.ksu.edu/farmersmarkets/>



The Kansas Food Policy Council

Image captured from <http://www.kansasruralcenter.org/projects.html>

Expanding the Buy Fresh/Buy Local Program to Kansas

Kansas Rural Center

Grant Award: \$15,642

Introduction

The “Expanding the Buy Fresh/Buy Local Program to Kansas” project has been through several permutations since the grant was awarded in late 2007. As originally written, the program would have developed a statewide chapter of the Buy Fresh, Buy Local (BFBL) Program. Between the proposal’s submission and its award, the BFBL parent organization, FoodRoutes, revamped its structure and was no longer offering statewide chapter organization. FoodRoutes suggested that the Kansas Rural Center instead develop five regional Kansas chapters. With grant funding of less than \$16,000, this was deemed impractical.

In 2008, the rural center requested and received a no-cost restructuring of the project, allowing the team to focus only on the Kansas River Valley. The rural center, along with FoodRoutes, established the Kaw River Valley Chapter of BFBL. The rural center signed a Memorandum of Understanding with FoodRoutes, paid the appropriate participation fees and developed the chapter’s graphic. But prior to the official launch of the Kaw River Valley chapter in Spring 2009, FoodRoutes was made aware of an issue with the established Kansas City BFBL national partner involving that chapter’s rights to use of the BFBL label in all non-farmers market outlets, such as retail stores and restaurants, within a 200 mile radius of the Kansas City metro area. To move forward, the Kaw River Valley BFBL program would have limited participation to farmers markets.

In early summer 2009, the rural center requested and received approval for a change to the “Expanding the Buy Fresh/Buy Local Program to Kansas” grant. The grant would now develop an independent local food branding label program for the Kaw River Valley. The program would use the Our Local Food label to assist consumers in identifying food raised by neighbors in the Kaw River Valley and generate increased purchasing of locally-sourced specialty crops both by consumers and food businesses.

Project Approach

The rural center’s approach was to develop the Our Local Food-Kaw River Valley program, a network of local farms, farmers markets, food businesses and consumers who were committed to increasing the production and sales of fresh, local food in northeast Kansas. The project had three goals:

- Foster relationships between food service operations and agricultural producers.
By providing networking resources, communication tools and marketing materials, the group aimed to enhance the capacity of restaurants and other food service operations to take advantage of the rich agricultural region. Growing trusting relationships between farmers and buyers is a primary focus of OLF-KRV.
- Provide a branding tool for locally grown products.
Consumers are placing increasing importance on locally grown foods. The Our Local Food-Kaw River Valley label seeks to unite the various sources for local foods, from grocery stores to restaurants to farmers markets. The eye-catching label will promote all suppliers of local foods. Farmers can also use the label themselves to brand farm-direct products.
- Educate consumers about the value of locally grown products.

While awareness of local food and its importance is increasing among consumers, the project staff members aimed to show consumers that it is easy to purchase and enjoy local foods on a regular basis.

Goals Achieved

The project had three measurable outcomes.

Outcome 1: The project will develop graphical marketing materials tailored for use in the Kansas River Valley, and identify locally grown Kansas food as highly desirable.

- The following materials were developed: OLF-KRV labels, bumper stickers, banners, member window clings, and a website.
- "Vocal Local" consumer education and outreach materials were also developed, including customer comment cards, which are business card-sized tools allowing customers to document the demand for local foods to area businesses.

Outcome 2: The project will facilitate the production of materials and assist farmers markets, farm stands and grocery stores as they purchase and display the materials.

- Once the label was developed, 5,000 stickers were printed and distributed to farm and food business members.
- The OLF-KRV bumper sticker was developed and 2,500 were printed and distributed to farm, farmers market and food business members, as well as Vocal Locals.
- The banners were developed and used by food business members.
- The member window clings were developed and distributed to 48 farm and business members.
- The OLF-KRV website was developed and has received more than 1,600 visits.

Outcome 3: The project will increase customer traffic for local products at these venues by 10 percent.

- The OLF-KRV project partnered with a local grocery store, The Community Mercantile, to host the Eat Local Challenge. More than 400 participants spent at least \$30 at 14 businesses participating in the OLF-KRV program. In an informal survey of participating businesses, about 60 percent noted that they went the extra mile to have numerous local options on their menus. Additionally, all those contacted shared that new customers stated they were at the restaurant because of the Eat Local Challenge. Operators also shared that many of their regulars asked which items qualified for the challenge, thereby increasing sales of locally-raised specialty crops.
- OLF Farmers markets generally noted increased sales of specialty crops despite the down economy. Percentage increase reported ranged from 0 percent to 30 percent with a mean of 10-20 percent. Markets that also participated in the Eat Local Challenge experienced great shopper response and distributed hundreds of passport stickers.

Results and Conclusions

After two years of challenges, the Our Local Food-Kaw River Valley program began seeing results in promoting specialty crops in northeast Kansas.

The OLF program developed a network of thirty-eight farms, seven farmers markets and ten food businesses. Relationships between farmers and food businesses were fostered by e-mail newsletters listing products, prices and delivery information. The project director served as a consultant to member restaurants and grocers, providing best practice resources and referrals. Tremendous opportunities exist

to assist food businesses and institutions in beginning to source more products from the region, but limitations on time and resources hindered the project director's ability to develop deeper relationships. Partners have determined that offering two or three workshops annual focusing on the development of relationships and best practices for local food sourcing would provide would provide farms and businesses with information and inspiration to build a stronger regional food system.

The chapter developed relationships with area organizations, such as the Douglas County Food Policy Council and a local chamber of commerce, as well as with businesses, to promote the purchase of food raised by Kaw Valley farmers. By focusing on regional food production as an economic development opportunity, OLF was able to remain above the sustainable versus conventional tussles common to the Kaw Valley. Documenting baseline numbers for local food purchasing, areas in production involved in Tier 1 (sales directly to consumer) and Tier 2 (sales to food businesses), and potential economic impacts of Tier 2 businesses, such as minimal processing and distribution, would provide local government officials and business organizations with incentive to develop initiatives and support regional food system development.

The OLF Partner Committee collaborated in numerous events to educate consumers on the economic and social benefits of a strengthened regional food system. This committee brought together many of the businesses and groups working to increase the production and sale of locally raised food in the Lawrence area. The project team was able to help consolidate resources and efforts. Two of the most prominent activities were the Eat Local Challenge and the Our Local Food Fest.

The Eat Local Challenge was sponsored by the Community Mercantile ("the Merc"), the region's most successful local food co-op. The challenge inspired participants to purchase food directly from local farms, Community Supported Agriculture programs and farmers markets; to buy OLF foods at the Merc; and to dine at OLF member restaurants. Participants received an OLF sticker with each purchase to add to their "passports"; those collecting six stickers were invited to the Eat Local Reception and were awarded a 2010 Eat Local Challenge t-shirt. This event was successful both in terms of the number of participants (400+) and the elevation of consumer awareness of the OLF label program.

The Our Local Food Fest, another OLF Partner Committee effort, turned the spotlight on local food production, school gardens and farm-to-school efforts in the Lawrence area and kicked off the 2010 Kaw Valley Farm Tour. The evening started with presentations from seven schools and organizations detailing success with school gardens or local food use in schools. Five OLF member restaurants provided samplings of dishes created from local foods before everyone settled in to watch a film, "What's on Your Plate," that detailed the quest of two 9-year-olds to locate the source of food available in their community.

Progress on Long-Term Outcome Measures

While this project was forced to adapt to external challenges, the project team felt as though the lessons learned over the project's three years have enabled Our Local Food to evolve into a program with a defined structure that can be replicated in other regions of the state. Through trial and error, a chapter structure was developed and modified. The new format, consisting of a regional coordinator and interns supported by both steering and partner committees, will provide seats at the table for a diverse group of collaborators that possess the resources to strategically begin developing the foundation for three regional food systems in Kansas.

In November 2010, the Kansas Rural Center's proposal to expand the Our Local Food program to the Wichita and Emporia metro areas was funded. The steps taken during the "Expanding the Buy Fresh/Buy Local Program to Kansas" project will permit much larger strides to be taken in the coming years.

Additional Information

See attached.

Contact

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We're Proud to Offer



Our Local Food...

**Identifying food grown
by our neighbors
in the Kaw River Valley**

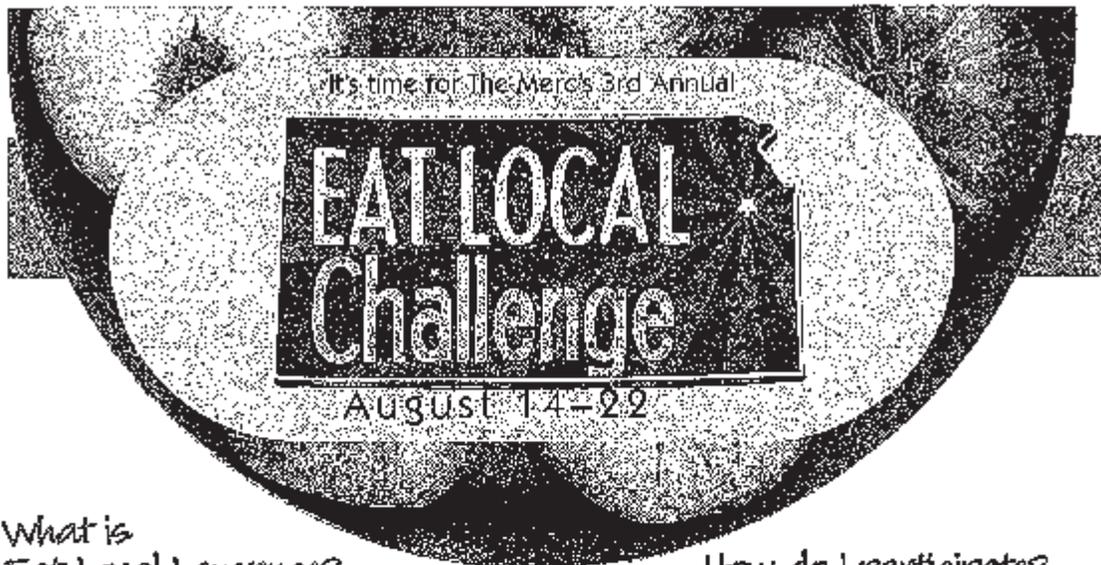
Raised on our local farms

Available at our local businesses

Growing our local economy...

Visit kawrivervalley.org/learn more





What is Eat Local Lawrence?

The Merc's **Eat Local Challenge** is just that, a challenge, a test of your commitment to the local food providers in our region. At The Merc we offer over 700 local products; everything from milk and bread to salad dressing and chips. This year, The Merc is encourage challengers to get local food not only from The Merc, but from farmers' markets, CSAs, and local restaurants that are committed to serving local food.

Upon sign-up, challengers receive a packet with a Local Foods Passport that when completed earns them an exclusive Eat Local Challenge T-Shirt and a special invitation to our Eat Local reception held August 22 in The Merc Cafe. The reception is for challengers only so be sure you sign-up to be part of the great time filled with live music, local food samplings and Free State Brewery Beer.



A big push for the Challenge this year was to promote authentic local food from our region. The Merc, as well as all of the Eat Local partners, have joined the new **Our Local Food Network** created by the Kansas Rural Center. This network aims to connect consumers and businesses with local farmers and producers who utilize food grown in the Kaw River Valley region. The "Our Local Foods" network puts the power of change into the consumer's hands by providing those "Vocal Locals" a forum to ask for more local food in more businesses around town. Look for the Our Local Food designation and stickers.

Please join the **Eat Local Challenge** to help bring more local food to the table.

K-R-C NEWS

How do I participate?

- 1 **Sign-up** at The Merc's Customer Service Desk before August 14 and receive your Eat Local Passport. Sign-up everyone in the family!
- 2 **Purchase local food** from The Merc or one of our partner's to receive Our Local Food stickers to put on your passport.
- 3 **Collect 6 stickers** before August 15 and receive an honorary Eat Local T-shirt during our exclusive Challenger reception in The Merc Cafe 5-8pm.



Local Farmers Markets

<p>Downtown Lawrence Farmer's Market Hours Saturday 7-11am Between 6th and 9th Streets 1011 S. 2nd St. 781-841-1311</p> <p>Tuesday 4-6pm Between 7th and 11th Streets 781-841-1311</p> <p>Thursday 4-6pm Valley and Market Street</p>	<p>West Junior High Garden Plot Farmers Market Hours Monday 4-6pm Thursday 4-6pm West Junior High 9700 Harvard Road</p>
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EAT LOCAL Challenge



August 14 - 22

As a local vendor who sells at the Farmers' Market, you are naturally part of The Merc's 3rd Annual Eat Local Challenge.

The Merc is encouraging challengers to get local food not only from The Merc, but from Farmers' Markets, CSAs, and restaurants that are committed to serving local food. This is a new concept this year an effort to expand the reach of the Challenge. We are testing this collaborative approach and have been quite happy with its success. If all goes well, next year we plan to use the same model and include more partners.

Challengers are encouraged to sign up before August 14th at The Merc to receive an Eat Local Passport. Challengers will be looking to buy local food from your booth in order to get stickers for their passports. Challengers who receive 6 stickers during the 10-day Challenge are rewarded with an Eat Local T-shirt at an exclusive reception in The Merc Cafe on the 22nd.



What's this mean to You?

All you need to do is **direct challengers to the Farmers' Market info booth** when they buy local products from your booth.

THE RULES:

- Stickers are **ONLY** available at the main Farmers' Market booth
- Stickers are **ONLY** for local food purchases
- Limit **one** sticker per bag of local goods
- Max. of **2** stickers for **2** bags

Please call **Josh** at The Merc if you have any questions, would like to offer feedback, or be a partner in next year's Challenge.

843-8544 or Branding@theMerc.coop

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Vocal Local Campaign
a program of Our Local Food-Kaw River Valley

The Our Local Food-Kaw River Valley Program is a newly-formed network of local farms, farmers markets, food businesses, and consumers who are committed to increasing the production and sales of fresh, local foods here in Northeastern Kansas.

The overall goal of OLF-KRV is to develop the market for local and sustainable agricultural products.

We are doing this in three ways:

Fostering relationships between food service operations and agricultural producers. By providing networking resources, communication tools and marketing materials we hope to enhance the capacity of restaurants and other food service operations to take advantage of our rich agricultural region. Growing trusting relationships between farmers and buyers is a primary focus of KRVF.

Providing a branding tool for locally grown products. Consumers are placing increasing importance on locally grown foods. The Kaw River Valley Food label will unite the various sources for local foods, from grocery stores, to restaurants and farmers markets. With an eye catching label, all suppliers of local foods will benefit. Farmers can also use the label themselves to brand farm-direct products.

Educating consumers about the value of locally grown products. While awareness of local food and its importance is increasing among consumers, we hope to show consumers how easy it is to enjoy local foods on a regular basis. The KRVF logo tells consumers, "You're in a place that's committed to supporting our local farms and our local economy."



Vocal Local

The strategy here is to empower consumers to ask for local foods every where they spend food dollars. We can do this through a Vocal Local Toolkit. Some of the components can be printed and other made available online.

Ideas for the Vocal Local Toolkit:

- Bumper Sticker
- Customer Comment Cards
- Local Foods Guide
- Templates for:
 - Letter to Editor
 - Letter to Legislator
- Make it Happen Guides:
 - School Lunch (w/Cordley as example)
 - School Garden (inspiration from Lawrence+eyond)
 - Food Policy Council
- Action Alerts
- Bi-monthly eNews on local food news and events



OLF Vocal Local bumper sticker, draft



OLF Vocal Local comment card



Greetings:

I am your customer and love to buy and eat locally grown foods. I have made a commitment to support family farmers by eating more products that are seasonal and grown closer to home. Please see the other side for my comments and suggestions.

Farm to Institutional Cafeteria Pilot Program

Kansas Rural Center

Grant Awarded: \$10,306

Introduction

The project was formed to encourage various institutional food services to use more local produce. The goals were to improve the local agricultural economy; increase the percentage local food consumed in schools and senior meals programs; differentiate locally and regionally grown foods from those commonly available from large conglomerates to those programs; and to extend the health benefits of eating fresh and unprocessed food to nutritionally at-risk groups, including school children and seniors.

Project Approach

In order to encourage various institutional food services to use more local produce, the Kansas Rural Center supported the organizations with a website (<http://www.buylocalks.com/kansas/>) designed to bring growers and food services together. The rural center also intervened one-on-one to introduce food services and growers. The rural center also provided \$1,000 in cost-share per institution to buy local food, or assist in additional preparation of unprocessed specialty crops. The goal was to work with six institutions.

Seven institutions signed contracts, but only three actually made purchases with the cost-share funds. A fourth did make local purchases, but used their own resources and did not utilize the program's cost share. One institution, a hospital, ran with the program and ended up purchasing more than \$23,000 in local food last year. The \$1,000 cost share was utilized, but the hospital surpassed that. They continue to make local food purchases.

Goals Achieved

One major goal was to have six institutional meals programs integrate locally produced specialty crops into their meals service. Three institutions made successful purchases. Seaman School District in Topeka purchased \$860 worth of specialty crops. Lawrence Memorial Hospital bought \$21,459.67 worth of local food, including \$3,948.55 in fruits and vegetables, earning \$1,000 in cost share. Cordley School in Lawrence hosted a one-day local food event that featured the Kansas Secretary of Agriculture and the head of school nutrition for the state. A third school, Centre USD 397, hosted a local foods event but did not seek reimbursement.

A second goal was for the schools to use the Buy Local website to find growers. This only worked in the case of two of the institutions. The website was not populated with enough growers, and/or the seasonally available produce on the website was not what the institutions were seeking. This necessitated more direct intervention by project staff to ensure that the food services could find produce. Only one of the six institutions made actual purchases through the website. However, others, not under contract with the project made purchases through the website..

At least 500 children and 50 parents and school officials ate and enjoyed locally produced specialty crops as a result of this project. Cafeteria workers at three schools worked with specialty crops and reported that they had a positive experience.

At least 500 people eating at a hospital cafeteria ate and enjoyed locally produced specialty crops. The hospital cafeteria now regularly uses locally produced specialty crops as a result of this project. Cafeteria workers at the hospital now seek and use locally produced specialty crops.

The Lawrence Food Policy Council has toured the hospital cafeteria and noted the use of local foods. The council will be touring a school cafeteria in Baldwin to better understand the barriers to use of locally produced specialty crops.

Results and Conclusions

This project was a small pilot project. It was difficult finding local produce, and it was difficult for the institutions to deviate from their normal purchase patterns for only \$1,000. The one exception was the hospital that embraced the idea. Their purchases of local food soared beyond the project's scope.

Without more participation in the project, about \$3,050 was returned to the USDA.

Barriers to changing systems are many, including food safety concerns, SOPs, institutional inertia and habits, increased costs for better produce, unavailability of all types of produce year around.

A strong, motivated, authorized champion at an institution can cut through most of these barriers, which was the case of the hospital. But generally, it is often easiest to go with the flow.

Financial issues do not seem to be an issue, once the institution commits to this. But prior to that, it seems insurmountable.

It is very important to get staff on board and to give them credit for their work. They are invariably proud of their efforts and are glad they have used the local foods. Likewise, parents and loved ones of those consuming the food service meals appreciate the effort.

Progress on Long-Term Outcome Measures

All the institutions that participated reported that they were pleased with the project. The cost-share amount didn't seem adequate to override barriers for the remaining institutions to integrating more local specialty crops into their meal setting. It is worth noting that having strong champion in any institution is the most important factor. That person, if they have the authority, can make local food purchases happen, even without subsidies, or far beyond the subsidy.

Additional Information

Not applicable.

Contact

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