

**Plan for Continuing and Expanding a
Buy Local New Hampshire Agriculture Program**
2008 SCBG Program Funds

Final Report
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Submitted by the
New Hampshire Department of Agriculture, Markets & Food

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Plan for Continuing and Expanding a Buy Local New Hampshire Agriculture Program

Project Summary

There are three key issues affecting the New Hampshire agricultural industry and its ability to market itself and its products: 1) fewer people have a connection to agriculture and an understanding of where food and other products come from; 2) consumers indicate they want to buy local products, but have difficulty identifying where local goods can be purchased; and 3) there is tremendous competition to local products from other parts of the USA and the world, which compounds the confusion for the consumer over what is truly local, and negatively impacts our local economies of small business who must compete with these regional US and global businesses.

Studies have shown a desire on the part of consumers to buy local products and a positive impact on the local economy when the purchase of local products is encouraged and enabled. (NH Dept. of Agriculture, Markets & Food, 2002; University of New Hampshire Cooperative Extension, 2003; University of New Hampshire 2005).

A study conducted by the University of New Hampshire in 2007 found that 90% of New Hampshire adults surveyed said they would be more likely to purchase NH farm and food products if they were labeled as such.

The New Hampshire Dept. of Agriculture, Markets & Food received funding under the 2008 Special Crop Block Grant Program in May 2009 to continue a NH Buy Local New Hampshire Agriculture Program, first established in 2007. The Dept. of Agriculture continues a partnership with the NH Division of Travel & Tourism Development to conduct this program which has contributed matching cash and in-kind funding. This has allowed non-specialty crop commodities to be included in the campaign.

Project Approach

Activities performed since August 2010 include:

Television advertising, brochure development and distribution, internet advertising. All activities were conducted in partnership with the NH Division of Travel & Tourism Development and their marketing contractor.

The program features a central logo:



Goals and Outcomes Achieved

The following have been accomplished on the Buy Local New Hampshire Agriculture Program, relative to the specific stated goals:

Goal 1.) Multi-media advertising using existing logo

- Television advertising to promote farm stands, farmers markets, harvest your own farms and seasonal products was conducted during August and September 2011. Approximately 100 spots aired on WMUR TV for a four week period. They were aired from 7 am to midnight around news broadcasts and high viewer shows for maximum visibility. 32 spots were also aired on NH Public television (WENH-TV) from August to early October.
- Companion internet advertising featuring farms stands, farmers markets, harvest your own farms was placed on wmur.com and nhptv.org from August-October 2011. Ads were also placed on FaceBook from September- December 2011.
- Two highway maps, originally produced in 2010 were opened to new farmers for participation and reprinted in 2011. One map is titled the “**New Hampshire Garden Guide**” and the other “**Taste of New Hampshire, New Hampshire’s Official Agricultural Map**”. A total of 75,000 of each map have been produced. It is also available on the internet.

Goal 2.) Educational component for consumers (current and the next generation) on the benefits of local and how to purchase local

- Above advertising (Goal 1) directs consumers to website and FaceBook page for more information on local agriculture and products and how to obtain
- Five talks to non-farm groups discussed the options for people to obtain information about New Hampshire agricultural products (maps, website, etc.) and reached about 170 people. Numerous Facebook and Twitter mentions promoted

the maps and other timely information such as where to find out about farmers markets, etc. Reaction to the Buy local campaign is positive, with typical comments like, "I've seen the ads" or "this is really exciting."

Goal 3.) Growers' education program on the benefits of being part of a Buy Local NH agriculture campaign and promoting under a common theme and logo.

- Presentations at two producer organization meetings (NH Farm Bureau and Granite State Dairy Promotion) with approximately 100 attendees, total. I was invited to provide a presentation about the Buy Local campaign to the annual meetings of these groups. This presentation is similar to what I have provided to several other agricultural organizations about this project. The Farm Bureau presentation was to the Grafton County Farm Bureau membership. The benefit to all of these presentations is that the producers are aware of the Buy Local campaign, what is being done on their behalf and what they can do as an organization and individuals to support the project. Producers are typically impressed with the scope of the project and appreciative of the efforts. I have also provided exhibits at various events which includes information about the Buy Local Campaign and these publications.

Goal 4.) Continue a mini-grant program to provide funds to eligible New Hampshire specialty crop commodity organizations to encourage the organization to tie into the Buy Local New Hampshire Agriculture program and use the logo in their own promotion programs.

We re-offered remaining funding to eligible organizations to conduct projects that tie into the Buy Local effort. Two groups received funding in 2011:

- The NH Christmas Tree Promotion Board for TV advertising
- The NH Maple Producers Association for maple education

Measurable Outcomes Accomplished:

- **20 percent increase in website visits as a result of the consumer campaign which will drive consumers to specific website(s) for information.** Comparing page views at our website from August 1, 2009- August 1, 2010 to views from August 1, 2010 to August 1, 2011, we have experienced a 541% increase in page views: 25,000 in August 2010 to 135,380, 2011. From December 2010-Dec 2011 the change was from 45,035 to 189,920 or 422% (measured via Webtrends). Additionally, the agriculture related information on the official NH Tourism website (there as a result of this partnership project) remains popular with information about farmers' markets, maple sugaring, Christmas trees and the Wine & Cheese trails, among the top viewed and downloaded.
- **3 percent increase in number of farm job hires due to business growth/expansion.** We were unable to calculate a true measure of farm hiring change for New Hampshire, only, on an annual basis. Statistics for this trend are

not available by state, but rather by region, annually. Looking at labor surveys conducted by the National Agricultural Statistics Service for the Northeast region (includes all of New England plus New York), hired workers decreased by 1.5% from 2009 to 2010 (most recent report available). The generally poor economic climate makes it difficult to accurately measure the effects of the Buy Local NH Agriculture Program on hired labor.

- **2 percent increase in awareness among consumers of the value of agriculture and its impact on their social, physical and economic environment, measured by a before and after survey.** We conducted the “before” survey in 2007 before the Buy Local NH Agriculture Campaign got underway, working with statisticians at the University of New Hampshire. The “after” survey was conducted in September of 2009, as recommended by the statistical experts at UNH. The report shows a huge increase regarding the knowledge of availability of local products. In 2007, 55% of the survey respondents were somewhat to very knowledgeable about local products. In 2009, 72% of respondents indicated they were somewhat to very knowledgeable about local products. Along with this, 95 % of respondents in 2009 indicated they would buy New Hampshire agriculture and food products if labeled as such. This is up slightly from 90% in 2007. This was fully reported in our 2008-FB final grant report and a copy of the report was included in Appendix F. There have been no additional consumer surveys since 2009.

We have been using FaceBook/Twitter to reach the public with information and education about local agriculture and the value of buying local. A targeted advertising campaign has been incorporated into the program to both drive people to FaceBook and promote agricultural products and activities at the same time. Our likes and followers have been steady increasing since we began the FaceBook advertising campaign in September of 2011. From September to December 2011, we saw a 23% increase in likes or followers of our FaceBook page (1185 likes/followers in September, 1543 at the end of December). The Buy Local campaign logo is prominent on the FaceBook page. The actual ads are so small and we have very limited space for the message. We have opted to focus on the message and a visual to highlight the industry sector.

- **10 percent increase in awareness among producers of the value of participation in the program and use of the common logo, measured by increased membership in NH Made and use of the logo.** General membership (all business categories) in NH Made has experienced a slight decrease (7%) in total members from December of 2010 to December of 2011. Some of the decline can be explained by timing of membership renewals and payments coming in the new year. Some of the decline can be explained by the current economy. The number of members in the agriculture category increased by 5%. Although this increase was below the 10% goal, any increase is a positive sign in the current economy.

The number of farms participating in the NH Virtual Farmers Marketplace (www.nhfarms.com), an online shopping site for NH agricultural products, has increased by 12% (111 to 126 farms)from 2010-2011. This website is a partnership effort of the NH Farm to Restaurant Connection, NH Made and NH Dept. of Agriculture, Markets & Food. The New Hampshire's Own logo is prominently featured on this site.

Participation in two new highway maps mentioned above (one featuring garden businesses and one all agriculture)created with SCBG funds and partnership funds increased from the first printing in 2010 to the second printing in 2011 by: Garden: 14% (from 150 in 2010 to 173 in 2011) and All Agriculture: 22% (from 255 in 2010 to 327 in 2011). This illustrates the perceived value of participating in these types of marketing efforts by agricultural businesses.

Beneficiaries

- 85 farmers markets with 400 total vendors (NH Farmers' Market Association and NH Dept. of Agriculture, Markets & Food, 2011)
- 120 commercial apple growers marketing through harvest your own, farm stand operations and some farmers' markets (US Census of Agriculture, 2007)
- Over 400 vegetable and berry growers marketing through farm stands, harvest your own and farmers markets (US Census of Agriculture, 2007)
- 382 greenhouse, nursery and related businesses marketing through on-site retail outlets, farm stands and farmers' markets (US Census of Agriculture, 2007)
- 300 commercial maple producers (NH Maple Producers Association, 2006)
- 284 registered beekeepers with colonies of honeybees (NH Dept. of Agriculture, markets & Food 2011)
- 181 Christmas Tree growers (US Census of Agriculture, 2007)
- 25 NH wineries (NH Winery Association, 2011)

Lessons Learned

New Hampshire's Agricultural products, including specialty crops, are desired by consumers. Our project has helped shoppers identify NH products and studies have shown consumers will select NH products when they are known to them. This project increases public awareness of the availability of local agricultural products and will create new opportunities and new markets for NH agricultural businesses.

The Buy Local New Hampshire Agriculture Campaign has been a success on multiple levels. First it has allowed NHDAMF to establish a unique partnership with New Hampshire's state tourism office which has continued beyond the scope of this individual project to the benefit of both agencies. Second, the marketing activities conducted in this campaign seem to have been successful in building awareness and demand for NH agricultural products. The interest in local food and agricultural products is booming.

Farmers' market numbers have increased including the establishment of 26 winter farmers' markets in 2011-12 that draw shoulder to shoulder crowds. We strongly believe this project has been a major factor in building awareness of our local agricultural industry and encouraging consumers to buy local products. Our project will continue with additional SCBG funds and we will continue to measure our impact.

The success of the FaceBook advertising has been a surprise. Likes/followers numbers increased substantially during the first quarter of the advertising campaign. We are seeing social media emerge as a major avenue for outreach to both the consumer and the producer and will continue to be a component of the Buy Local New Hampshire Agriculture Campaign moving forward.

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Appendices

Appendix A Facebook Ad examples

Appendix B Maps

Appendix A: Examples of FaceBook advertising to both promote the different industry sectors as well as encourage following the NH Dept. of Agriculture, Markets & Food FaceBook page for further information.

Winter Farmers' Markets



Winter is here! Like NH Agriculture for more information on where to find your local NH winter farmers' market this season.

Support Local NH Florists



Like NH Ag & surprise your Valentine with a beautiful floral arrangement from a local florist or winter farmers' market this holiday.

Locally Grown Veggies!



Shop your local winter farmers' markets for the holidays. Like NH Agriculture to find out where they are!

Maple Sugaring in NH



Experience NH's greatest tradition: maple sugaring season. For more information including maple sugaring events & info, like NH Ag.

PYO NH Grown Tree!



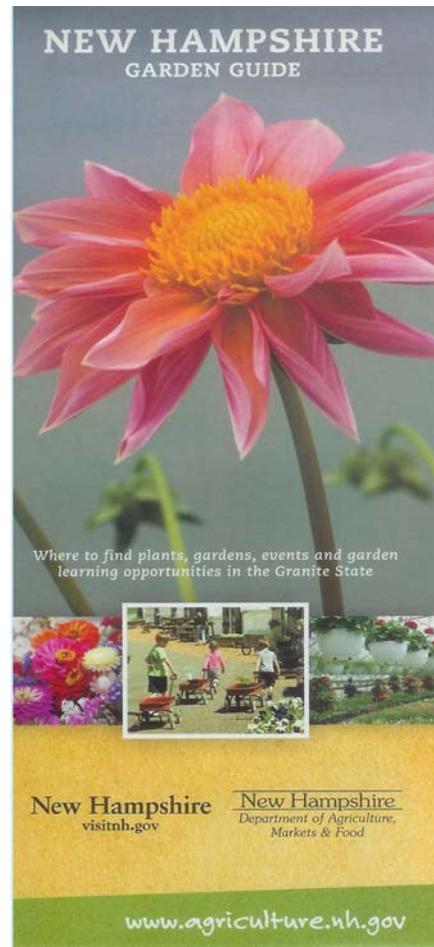
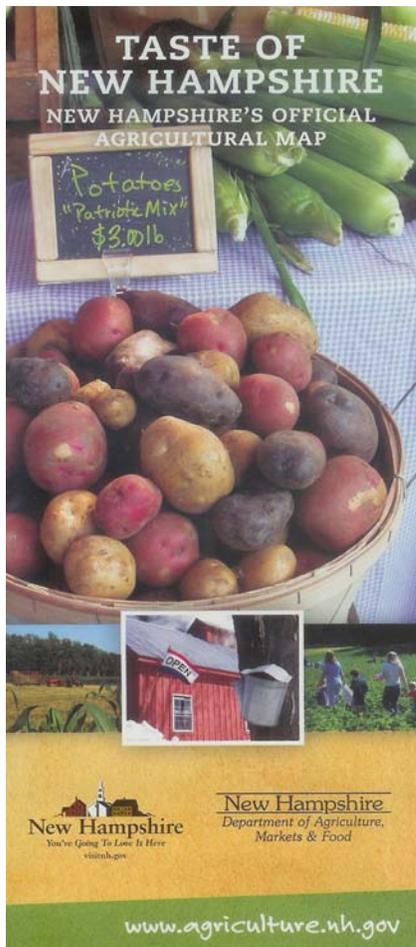
Is there anything better than the smell of a fresh-cut Christmas tree? Learn about NH's PYO Xmas tree farms by liking NH Agriculture!

Spring is Here!



For up to date information on when to plant, locally grown flowers and shrubs, gardening tips & more, like NH Ag.

Appendix B: Map covers and internet editions.



Two Highway maps were produced and made available to New Hampshire agricultural businesses and organizations to participate in. 60,000 of each map were produced. Participating businesses are located on the map and have brief listings on the back with more detail and contact information. Each map is also available online and can be updated quarterly to include new businesses that missed the original registration.

Here are links to each map by region:



[Dartmouth/Lake Sunapee Region](#)
[Merrimack Valley Region](#)
[White Mountains Region](#)
[Great North Woods Region](#)
[Monadnock Region](#)
[Lakes Region](#)
[Seacoast Region](#)

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