



**North Carolina Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services
2008 Specialty Crops Block Grant
12-25-B-0834
Final Report**

Project Summary

North Carolina Farm Fresh/Buy Local Ad Campaign

North Carolina grocery stores and markets carry food products and green goods from all around the globe. Our consumers needed to be made aware of what produce and food items and green goods are produced locally and support the local/state economy. A campaign was designed to educate consumers on locally produced produce, poinsettias and Christmas trees.

The objective of the campaign was to highlight fresh, locally grown produce (both fruits and vegetables), pecans, and ornamental plants and Christmas trees direct from North Carolina farms and nurseries. This was accomplished by partnering with North Carolina produce and commodity associations in a cooperative advertising campaign and using mixed media to build consumers awareness of local food and green industry products as they came into season. Radio, television and print ads were utilized throughout most of 2009 to promote locally grown produce, etc. and to drive traffic to www.NCFarmFresh.com Website consumer hits were tallied for the period April 1 – November 30, 2009 and compared to the same time period a year earlier, when the website was up and running but without the benefit of an advertising campaign. Web hits increased by 23% during the promotional period in 2009 compared to the same time frame in 2008.

The NC Farm Fresh website contains a search feature with which one can find local growers/producers/suppliers of fresh NC produce and other agricultural produce across the entire state of North Carolina.

\$178,000 in grant funding was expended on this project. Another \$17,000 was contributed by commodity associations towards this cooperative promotional campaign.

Project Approach

A mixed media campaign was designed that incorporated print, radio and TV advertising employed against specific targeted consumer groups. Radio spots were selected along with publications that gave the campaign maximum exposure towards the target population; that is, housewives age 19-46 who made most of the food purchasing decisions for their households. Additionally, radio spots focused morning/afternoon on drive times so that commuting consumers would hear targeted messages focusing on local North Carolina food products, and where to find such products on the NC Farm Fresh website. Ads were focused on what was in season; for example, blueberries were highlighted during June/July 2009 and Christmas trees were promoted towards the end of the year as the Holiday season approached. The NC Blueberry Commission contributed \$9,000 to the advertising campaign. The North Carolina Strawberry Association contributed \$4,500 towards the campaign which included an ad on UNC-TV, a public television station; again targeting those with discretionary incomes and having an interest in all things North Carolinian. The North Carolina Christmas Tree Association contributed \$3,000 towards the radio spots that promoted NC Christmas trees. The NC Tomato Association contributed \$500 towards their promotion.

Specific promotional campaign elements by commodity are as follows;

- NC Blueberries; print advertising in Our State, Edible Piedmont, Farm Bureau and Metro magazine, radio spots
- NC Strawberries; UNC TV
- NC Christmas trees/poinsettia; radio spots and print advertising (Our State magazine)
- NC Tomatoes; radio spots
- NC Pecans; radio spots
- NC Apples; radio spots

Also included were web ads on Yahoo for www.NCFarmFesh.com. Yahoo reported that web clicks to go directly to the Farm Fresh website were higher than average for this type of web advertising, indicating a high level of interest in the site.

Radio ads were also run that supported www.NCFarmFresh.com in general, and did not target a specific produce item.

Copies of various radio, television and print ads are attached to this report. The webmaster in charge of the www.NCFarmFresh.com website tallied web hits for the Department to use as a measurement of success in driving consumer web traffic to the site. Web hits on the site increased from an average of 777 a day during 2008 to 954 during the promotional period in 2009; an increase of 23%.

Goals and Outcomes Achieved

The coordinated mixed media campaign and accompanying website advertising were successful in driving additional consumer traffic to the www.NCFarmFresh.com website, as measured by hits on the website and recorded by the NCDA webmaster (an overall increase of 23%), during a year that experienced a really tough economic situation. The activity was also considered a success by some of the commodity associations participating in the cooperative advertising campaign. The NC Blueberry Commission, for example, has decided to pursue similar promotional activities in 2010 regardless of whether or not grant or NCDA funds were available.

Cooperative advertising is a very useful way of leveraging commodity association funds with additional funds from grants or other sources. By combining the two sources we are able to increase the reach of many promotional campaigns that are otherwise limited by small associations and their limited budgets. It also encourages by in from those most affected by the advertising campaigns.

Lessons Learned

What the department learned from this grant funded advertising campaign is that it is possible to build consumer awareness of locally grown North Carolina foods products. We can drive traffic to specific consumer oriented internet informational sites through advertising provided the media selected is carefully chosen to impact the intended targeted audience. In this case the print ads were placed in magazines that target consumers who are interested in North Carolina and are therefore easier to influence than those who are more price conscious. Radio ads took advantage of popular morning drive time programming, and television ads were placed on UNC TV; a very popular and publically supported North Carolina public television station. Web ads completed the circle, that is, if consumers weren't exposed to the "Buy Local" message through print, radio or TV then we had a pretty good shot of getting to them through the internet.

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Attachments

- Strawberry TV ad prepared for UNC TV
- Radio spot for strawberries
- Christmas trees, poinsettias radio spot
- Christmas tree/poinsettias print ad (Our State)
- Ad copy for three radio spots; pecans and apples and NC Farm Fresh



North Carolina Blueberries

**Loaded with antioxidants, fiber,
vitamins, and minerals...**

**They're local, fresh, great tasting,
and available now...**

**Find some near you at
NCFarmFresh.com**



www.ncblueberrycouncil.org

2009 Blueberry Print Ad Which Ran in Four Different Magazines

Notes:

- Female Voice
- Light, upbeat music embedded (maybe acoustic)

NC Farm Fresh - :60**Focus on Apples**

Fall in North Carolina means many things...cooler temperatures, changing leaves, and of course, crisp, juicy, and delicious North Carolina apples. Locally grown, they're available now at farmers markets, roadside stands, and retail farms near you. Log on to NC Farm Fresh dot com to find some today. No matter the variety, NC Farm Fresh dot com will help you find it.

An excellent source of fiber, potassium, and Vitamins A and C, North Carolina apples are naturally fat free and low calorie. Slice them up and eat them raw or add them to a smoothie or salad. Either way they're a nutritious and delicious treat. And don't forget they make wonderful pies and cobblers too.

When you buy apples this fall, be sure they're grown right here in North Carolina. Make NC Farm Fresh dot com your number one source for finding locally grown apples, and remember, when you want the best and freshest foods around, it's Got to be NC – a program supported by the Golden Leaf Foundation.

Production Notes:

- Female Voice
- Light, upbeat music embedded
- Final phrase of the spot is a tag line (“a program supported...”) and may be read at a different speed

NC Farm Fresh – :60

Looking to buy local? Then make NC Farm Fresh dot com your one stop source for finding farmers markets, roadside stands, and retail farms near you. Enjoy the best and freshest produce available by eating locally grown products direct from the farm.

Using NC Farm Fresh dot com is simple and easy. With the search tool, you can find whatever you’re looking for including apples, cabbage, pumpkins, sweet potatoes, and leafy greens. And you can search by region or county.

Produce grown locally is fresher because it doesn’t travel as far from the farm to your plate. And by buying locally grown produce direct from the sellers you’ll find on NC Farm Fresh dot com, you’re keeping your dollars close to home and keeping our state’s farmers on the land.

So the next time you’re online, visit NC Farm Fresh dot com and make an effort to buy more locally grown produce. Remember, that’s NC Farm Fresh dot com. When you want the best and freshest produce around, it’s Got to Be NC...a program supported by the Golden Leaf Foundation.

Notes:

- Female Voice
- Light, upbeat music embedded (maybe acoustic)

Focus on Pecans - :60

North Carolina pecans are back, and just in time for the holiday season. Grown locally, you can buy them at farmers markets and roadside stands today. Log on to NC Farm Fresh dot com to find some near you.

Many holiday recipes are perfect for pecans including cakes, salads, breads, and of course, pecan pies. And they're great as a snack too. Eat them raw or flavor them according to your tastes. Either way, rest assured you're eating a heart healthy food that's cholesterol and sodium free. With 19 vitamins and minerals, pecans are low in saturated fats and full of fiber too!

When buying pecans, be sure to look for ones that are plump and uniform in both size and color. And don't worry if you can't eat them all, shelled pecans can be stored for use year round in your refrigerator or freezer.

So stock up on North Carolina pecans today. Visit NC Farm Fresh dot com to find some near you. Remember, that's NC Farm Fresh dot com for locally grown pecans. When you want the best, it's got to be NC.