



**Final Performance Report
Specialty Crop Block Grant Program
Kansas Department of Agriculture
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Highland Community College Vineyard Workshop and Grape Extension Final Report

Project Summary

Provide a background for the initial purpose of the project, which includes the specific issue, problem or need that was addressed for this project. Establish the motivation for this project by presenting the importance and timeliness of the project. If the project built on a previous effort funded by the Specialty Crop Block Grant, describe how this project complemented and enhanced the earlier work.

This project was an opportunity to build upon the success of work completed in 2011, providing extension services and hosting workshops for the Kansas grape and wine industry. During the workshops and conversations in 2011, HCC identified a major need for the industry to be an increase in grape acreage. The 2012 project sought to continue the extension services and focus the workshop series toward the grape acreage deficiency. The college scheduled 9 workshops, but added one extra at the request of some local growers in western Kansas. The ten workshops focused on vineyard activities and some "how to" information about planting a vineyard. The workshops were spaced out at one per month, February through November. HCC also attended state grape conferences in KS, NE and MO as well as other grape conferences in TX and CA. VESTA sponsored travel for Mr. Kohl to NM to learn about their grape industry, and Mr. Martin attended a second conference in NE focused on pesticides. The goal of these conferences and travels was to make new contacts, learn new vineyard practices and "best practices," and bring that information back to KS and disseminate it through the workshops.

Project Approach

Briefly summarize activities and tasks performed during the grant period. Whenever possible, describe the work accomplished in both quantitative and qualitative terms. Include significant results, accomplishments, conclusions and recommendations. Include favorable or unusual developments, and the contributions and role of project partners.

The basic approach of this project was to visit several areas of Kansas to introduce HCC's Viticulture and Enology program to the grape and wine industry, present vineyard information regarding best practices and how to plant a new vineyard, and to gather information that could be disseminated to other members of the industry through workshops, e-mail and phone conversations. In all, HCC conducted ten workshops in Saline, Jefferson, Pottawatomie, Dickinson, Lyon, Douglas, Harvey, Russell, Cowley, and Miami Counties. HCC personnel visited approximately 35 Kansas vineyards and wineries in 2012 and did 6 site visits with perspective vineyard owners. HCC sponsored the KS grape and wine conference in January, and personnel attended grape/wine conferences and meetings in NE, MO, TX, CA and NM. One contact made in Kansas was Ward Upham, editor of the weekly KSU Horticulture Newsletter. Mr. Upham agreed to post information about the vineyard workshops in his newsletter each month. HCC also received a marvelous compliment from Middle Creek Winery in Paola, KS. Steven and Kristin Graue said that HCC is the "best resource in Kansas" for questions and concerns during an interview published in Midwest Wine Press, <http://mldwestwinepress.com/2012/11/29/over-the-rainbow-in-kansas-middle-creek-winery/>

Another benefit of the workshops and extension work completed has been recognition by several leading organizations in Kansas. When submitting grant proposals to National Science Foundation In October 2012, HCC received letters of support from Kansas Grape Growers and Winemakers Association, Kansas Viticulture and Farm Winery Association, KS Department of Agriculture, KSU Ag Research and Extension and a Kansas Senator. All of this support, in addition to individual vineyard and winery owners has led to a positive initial response from NSF. HCC has been awarded another Specialty Crop Block Grant for 2013 and hopes to secure additional funding from NSF In 2013.

Goals and Outcomes Achieved

Describe activities completed that achieved the goals and measurable outcomes for this project. Provide a comparison of actual accomplishments with the goals established for the reporting period. Clearly convey completion of outcomes by illustrating baseline data that has been gathered to date to show progress toward achieving set targets.

The proposal for this project outlined four major goals: 1) Cover all major vineyard activities at workshops; 2) Continue offering Individual guidance for industry members and conduct 60 site-visits during the year; 3) Become a clearinghouse for industry news and information; 4) Continued participation in KS Department of Ag Grape and Wine Industry Council. HCC had marvelous success in the first goal as the 10 workshops were spread out over the entire year, so we visited vineyards during every phase of growth and harvest. Workshop attendance was predicted to be around 120 attendees but was actually 183. HCC conducted site visits on an "as needed" basis during the year. Combining the workshops and site visit requests, HCC personnel did a total of 41 site visits which is short of the 60 predicted. It's unknown if 60 was an overestimate, if the drought may have affected the need for site visits, or if possibly some visits were avoided by extensive phone and e-mail correspondence. The workshops and periodic mass-e-mails were used to disseminate information gathered at various conferences, meetings, and informal research. Owners of Middle Creek Winery claimed that "the best resource in Kansas is Highland Community College" for issues and questions. It was also noted that many of the workshops were attended by longtime Kansas grape growers and winemakers. In fact, some of these longtime industry members attended multiple workshops which is evidence that HCC is presenting useful and timely information; that is, HCC because an effective clearinghouse for information to the industry.

Finally, HCC sought to participate in the KDA Grape and Wine Industry Advisory Council; however, that council was revamped during the 2012 legislative session and did not meet in 2012. It is our hope to pick up with that group in 2013.

Beneficiaries

Provide a description of the groups that benefited from the completion of this project's accomplishments. Clearly state the quantitative data that concerns the beneficiaries affected by the project and/or the potential economic impact of the project.

The main beneficiaries of this grant are members of the Kansas grape and wine Industry. The 183 workshop attendees and their friends who got copies of our handouts certainly gained a direct benefit from this project. Those who received site visits probably had the greatest benefit from the project because HCC personnel were able to tell them specific Information about their vineyard and/or winery. There Is an unknown number of people on the "grapes" email list, but HCC sends periodic (roughly quarterly) emails to the list with Information about upcoming workshops, classes, and events In the Industry. HCC also created a Facebook page which Is gaining In popularity across Kansas and actually worldwide. There are several "likes" from grape and wine Industry members In the Mediterranean and Middle Eastern countries. The page has photos of the HCC vineyard and winery as well as shared articles from other Facebook pages such as the viticulture department at Michigan State University, from VESTA, from Patricia Howe in Napa, and from others.

Lessons Learned

Offer insights into the lessons learned by the project staff as a result of completing this project. Describe the positive and negative results and conclusions for the project. Provide unexpected outcomes or results that were an effect of implementing the project. If goals or outcome measures were not achieved, Identify and share the lessons learned to help others expedite problem-solving.

Most of the goals of this project were achieved successfully. One lesson learned Is that Kansas still is deficient In grape acreage. The wineries have a much greater demand than the available supply. Kansas Is seeing nearly every producer Increasing their grape acreage, but the financial Investment Is great, and the time between planting and first harvest (3-4 years) makes the Investment VERY risky. HCC personnel were fairly sure of this already, but the harsh drought in Kansas drastically reduced grape production in 2012. In fact, some vineyards that weren't irrigated died. The early Indication is that the wine quality is generally better from a standpoint of taste, but the quantity is much lower than was hoped. One bit of feedback from the workshops was that the wineries missed having workshops to attend. This project focused fairly exclusively on vineyards. The grant proposal for 2013 has a mixture of both vineyard and winery topics to meet the demand for both the vineyard and winery owners/operators. It also has a couple of workshops geared toward wine consumers.

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Specialty Crop Block Grant Final Report Form

Agreement No. 12-25-B-1229

Kansas Rural Center

“OUR LOCAL FOOD: CULTIVATING SPECIALTY CROP CONNECTIONS FOR KANSAS FARMS, BUSINESSES, AND CONSUMERS”

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1695-2

Project Summary

Provide a background for the initial purpose of the project, which includes the specific issue, problem or need that was addressed for this project. Establish the motivation for this project by presenting the importance and timeliness of the project. If the project built on a previous effort funded by the Specialty Crop Block Grant, describe how this project complemented and enhanced the earlier work.

Consolidation in agricultural production and the creation of efficient supply chains have resulted in the loss of local processing facilities and distribution systems as food manufacturers and marketers sought to gain economies of scale. With these shifts in production, processing and distribution, Kansas experienced a steep decline in specialty crop production. In 1944, 3,888 farms reported growing vegetables for off-farm sales.

The 2007 Census of Agriculture set the number of vegetable farms at 474.

Kansans spend \$767 million on fruits and vegetables each year while farm income from the sale of these specialty crops is estimated at only \$32 million. This disparity illustrates the potential for positive economic impact by increasing specialty crop production in our state. More of our food dollars could be kept here at home, in our local economy and supporting our own farmers and their communities.

We did not implement any non-specialty crop promotion or programming with these funds. Specialty crop promotion was ensured through training provided by our staff to participants and growers as part of the program. The program was promoted specifically to and for use by business users and growers of specialty crops, for specialty crops. In addition, this project's Savor the Season program was created in conjunction with growers and extension agents to exclusively promote specialty crops with recipe cards featuring eligible vegetables. No other product types were promoted through this program.

Importance and Timeliness

On the national level, direct-to-consumer sales, through outlets such as farmers markets, farm stands and U-pick operations, totaled about \$1.2 billion in 2007. This represents an annual growth rate of about 10% between 2002 and 2007 – twice that

of the rest of the food economy.

Activity in Kansas not only mirrors that national trend, but demonstrates even more potential. The number of Kansas farmers markets doubled over the previous decade. Furthermore, between 2002 to 2007, Kansas rose from 45th to 33rd in state ranking based on vegetable acres per 100 people.

These statistics point to a burgeoning demand for local food that the USDA estimates will reach \$7 billion by 2012; however, major barriers remain a threat to redevelopment of successful regional food systems.

Kansas specialty crop producers who wish to capitalize on the local food movement need to build sustainable relationships with buyers, many of whom are unfamiliar with available crops and the concept of seasonality. Farmers need to learn how to work with food businesses that are accustomed to placing orders with a distributor, who resolves many of the businesses' challenges by delivering produce graded and packed to industry standards, which can be onerous on individual small producers.

Through the Our Local Food program, relationships between farmers and specialty crop buyers were established and built upon.

Project Approach

Briefly summarize activities and tasks performed during the grant period. Whenever possible, describe the work accomplished in both quantitative and qualitative terms. Include significant results, accomplishments, conclusions and recommendations. Include favorable or unusual developments, and the contributions and role of project partners.

The Our Local Food Program performed the following tasks:

- We helped develop new relationships between growers, food businesses, and consumers and enhance their communication with one another, by launching a new food connections website and by utilizing regional coordinators to personally assist with linkages;
- We generated sales of local produce by developing and disseminating critical, needed information, such as recipe cards and safe-handling instructions for consumers;
- We helped build capacity and meet the demand for local produce by providing technical assistance to farmers and buyers, such as marketing tools and educational events;
- We provided a local branding tool, the "Our Local Food" label and materials, that allowed for connections by various outlets – from grocery stores and restaurants to farmers markets and farm stands;
- We provided education and training to farms, business buyers, and local food consumers, at regional workshop in northeast Kansas and the Wichita area.
- And we motivated consumers to look and ask for the label identifying food grown by their neighbors wherever they spend their food dollars and educated them about the diversity and value of locally grown products, through regular outreach activities and communications tools such as social media and e-mail.

To accomplish these tasks, we utilized this funding to provide comprehensive operations in current chapters we had established through previous Specialty Crop Block Grant funding, while expanding the program statewide by including both a Southeast Chapter, and a State Chapter intended to encompass farms, businesses, and consumers outside of the four chapter regions.

By using a regional chapter model, the program took advantage of benefits of both having a local coordinator to build relationships with existing producer and business relationships in the specific area, combined with the benefits of a larger network comprised of other chapters. This program network enabled sharing of resources, skills and experiences to support individual chapter success while growing specialty crop demand, awareness and sales throughout the state.

During the course of this project, we partnered with a number of other organizations and initiatives to accomplish activities aimed at boosting fresh fruit and vegetable production and consumption, including:

- K-State Research & Extension, assisting with Savor the Season program development, and Local Connections Workshop planning and hosting.
- K-State Center for Engagement and Community Development, assisting with fall event in Brown County and providing training for community food development to assist with our local foods work.
- Community, regional and state organizations including the Brown County Healthy Community Coalition, Wichita Health & Wellness Coalition, Douglas County Food Policy Council, Kansas Department of Education, Kansas Department of Health & Human Services, Western Kansas Dietetics Association, Kansas Sampler Foundation, See-Kan RC&D, Kansas Health Foundation, and more, for outreach and education activities to grow connections between our farms, vendors and consumers.

Discuss the tasks provided in the Work Plan of the project proposal:

Savor the Season: Specialty Crop Grower Program: We identified expert growers and agents in Kansas with special knowledge of vegetable crops that were selected for promotion in the consumer programming portion of Savor the Season. These experts drafted grower-information guidelines. Access to these guidelines were provided to growers to aid in their increased production of these vegetables.

Savor the Season: Consumer Programming:

A survey of public and farmer constituents was conducted to determine which vegetable crops would be preferred for promotion during the project through recipe cards and grower education, with a goal of growing production and sales of those crops. 10 crops were chosen, and recipes solicited from farmers, members of the public and nutrition experts. These were designed into recipe cards that were produced and provided to farmers markets for distribution to their vegetable growers and consumers.

Our Local Food: Marketing Guide, Toolkit and Consultation Program: We produced a marketing guide for specialty crop producers that provided information about proper handling and regulations in Kansas for selling specialty crops in both retail and wholesale environments. We also provided tip sheets for marketing fruits and vegetables to a variety of customers. We produced local food branded marketing materials for specialty crop growers and provided them as a marketing "tool kit" to specialty crop growers. Due to time constraints, we were not able to offer the one-on-one interview and consultation program as planned.

Our Local Food: Website and Online Foodhub Development: The Our Local Food website for specialty crop members was developed and launched. Members provided listings on the site detailing their specialty crops produced.

Our Local Food: Graphics and Branding Development: The Our Local Food brand was created and utilized on marketing materials for this project, which were provided to specialty crop growers to signify to consumers that their specialty crops were grown locally.

Our Local Food: Chapter Development and Programming: A new Southeast chapter was launched, with a contract coordinator established to conduct the activities of the project in the counties of the southeastern portion of the state. Due to time constraints and contractor turnover in that position, however, target tasks such as a local event were not completed. A positive outcome did include increased knowledge about the challenges of growing and marketing specialty crops in Southeast Kansas, through contacts with specialty crop growers and retail and wholesale users that were cultivated in that region as a result of these activities. The South Central, Twin Rivers and Kaw Valley Chapters were expanded through continued coordinator activities in those regions, including local events, local interactions and newsletters. While not developed as a new "chapter," we did actively solicit engagement with growers and specialty crop users in areas of the state without a defined chapter. As a result, several specialty crop growers attended events hosted in the other regions.

Complementary activity

A previous KDA Specialty Crop Block Grant, "Our Local Food Program: Strengthening Awareness and Sales of Kansas Specialty Crops in a Tri-Region Area," expanded the program beyond the original Kaw River Valley chapter (12 counties stretching from Ft. Riley to Kansas City), to include the South Central (eight counties surrounding Wichita) and Twin Rivers (six counties surrounding Emporia) chapters. It brought together diverse stakeholders to establish steering and partner committees for each chapter. The program also had developed the first stages of a branding campaign and web site. In addition, another KDA Specialty Crop Block Grant, "Growing Healthy Families, Farms and Communities through Farmers Market EBT," helped provide EBT training and materials to markets and consumers, to boost specialty crop sales at farmers markets.

Goals and Outcomes Achieved

Describe activities completed that achieved the goals and measurable outcomes for this project. Provide a comparison of actual accomplishments with the goals established for the reporting period. Clearly convey completion of outcomes by illustrating baseline data that has been gathered to date to show progress toward achieving set targets.

Goal 1: Increased production and diversification of Kansas specialty crops.

Performance Measure: Number of farmers who initiate or expand production of one of the ten targeted Savor the Season specialty crops.

Target: Twenty-five farmers to initiate or expand production of one of the ten targeted Savor the Season specialty crops in 2012.

Results:

We administered the Savor the Season program through farmers markets instead of through individual farmers. Therefore, we gathered data from 39 Farmers Markets who used the program, rather than from individual farmer vendors. Respondents were asked if they had vendor feedback on whether they experienced increases in sales of the crops on the crop cards. Of those who had received feedback, increase in sales of all crops except onions and garlic were reported, but the number of farm vendors reporting this could not be quantified.

It is important to note that an increase in production (not just sales) requires a chain of events, from pre-season planning to a promise of increased sales, so it is an event that would likely unfold over 2-3 seasons, at minimum. Producing these materials required an adequate amount of time to gather the information, compile it into edited and designed product, the length of print process, and finally, distribution to markets around the state. Therefore, materials were not completed and distributed until late spring and early summer, due to the grants' limitations in time. This was too late to have a measurable impact on increased production; however, in this coming year, increased sales from last season could be expected to impact increased production of these crops.

Goal 2: New relationships between producers and food businesses will be established resulting in increased Kansas specialty crops purchases.

Performance Measure: Number of new relationships established that result in sales of specialty crops.

Target: Twenty additional relationships between food businesses and specialty crop producers in 2012.

Results:

The program exceeded its targets for adding 20 purchasing relationships, with 24 new relationships reported in our end-of-year survey.

Goal 3: The Our Local Food chapter labels will be used in a variety of marketing outlets permitting consumers to easily identify and purchase locally raised specialty crops.

Performance Measure: Number of members using the OLF label in each of the program categories – farmers, farmers markets, local food businesses.
Target: 75 farmer, 22 farmers market, and 25 food business members using the labels in the promotion and sale of Kansas specialty crops.

The new OLF website counted 133 members at year's end: 59 farms, 5 farm stand marketing outlets, 55 farmers markets, 8 businesses and institutions, 10 u-pick operations and CSA's, and 4 nonprofit / "other." This surpasses the total number anticipated, but it does not meet the goal for most categories, other than farmers markets. This can be attributed to the launch of the website not occurring till mid-year (again, due to length of time of site development and production requirements).

In the end-of-season survey, only 21 members reported using the label materials, with the most popular materials being product stickers, banners and window clings. This number is probably significantly lower than actual usage, as the number of respondents only represented about one-third of total members. If we extrapolate to the full membership, it could be estimated that about 60 members utilized these promotional items.

Goal 4: Heightened consumer awareness of specialty crops, producers, and improved availability of information to locate outlets for locally raised food.

- Performance Measure: Number of subscribers to bimonthly OLF e-newsletters, number of OLF web site unique visitors, number of followers on social media sites such as Facebook and Twitter.
- Target: 1750 combined subscribers to chapter e-newsletters and 3500 unique visitors to the web site, and 500 followers on social media sites.

Results:

The program far surpassed its target for subscribers to the OLF media, with over 1,000 combined Facebook subscribers and over 2,000 total e-newsletter subscribers. Due to a long process of transition of the new website on a new platform, we did not collect the number of website visitors.

In the final quarter, e-Newsletters were consolidated into one newsletter that included news and information for all OLF regions.

Goal 5: Producer, food buyer, and consumer attendance at regional workshops to demonstrate and disseminate critical information essential to generating sales of local produce.

- Performance Measure: Number of attendees at Local Food Connections Workshops held in each region.
- Target: 25% increase in attendees at the 2012 workshops, over 2011, when about 75 participants attended the three workshops, held in late 2011 at Manhattan, Wichita and Emporia.

Results

We dedicated efforts to two major events aimed at boost consumption and production of fresh fruits and vegetables, rather than hosting an event in each region. Our two

major fall events counted about 125 in total attendance, far surpassing this benchmark. At least 70 attended the FEAST activity in Brown County, and 54 attended the Local Connections Workshop at Wichita, which drew attendees from northeast, southeast and western Kansas. Evaluations were collected at both events. In addition, an early-season farmers market workshop at Marysville by the Kaw River Valley coordinator attracted about 25 people.

Beneficiaries

Provide a description of the groups that benefited from the completion of this project's accomplishments. Clearly state the quantitative data that concerns the beneficiaries affected by the project and/or the potential economic impact of the project.

This project impacted the specialty crop industry by providing the resources and technical assistance needed to make connections between buyers and sellers, increase awareness and diversity of crops marketed, advance production and postharvest handling practices, and improve marketing strategies.

Primary project beneficiaries were specialty crop producers with farms or existing marketing channels in the following counties: Allen, Anderson, Atchison, Bourbon, Butler, Chase, Cherokee, Coffey, Cowley, Crawford, Douglas, Franklin, Geary, Greenwood, Harper, Harvey, Jackson, Jefferson, Johnson, Kingman, Labette, Leavenworth, Linn, Lyon, Miami, Morris, Neosho, Osage, Pottawatomie, Reno, Riley, Sedgwick, Shawnee, Sumner, Wabaunsee and Wyandotte.

Secondary beneficiaries were various markets for Kansas specialty crops including: farmers markets, grocers, restaurants, schools and institutions as well as individual consumers.

And finally, the thirty-six targeted counties benefit through the retention of economic activity in their local economies.

Number of beneficiaries impacted:

The 2007 USDA Census of Agriculture listed 342 farms producing vegetables and 342 orchards in the four chapter regions.

At the end of this project, the new OLF website counted 133 members: 59 farms, 5 farm stand marketing outlets, 55 farmers markets, 8 businesses and institutions, 10 u-pick operations and CSA's, and 4 nonprofit / "other."

As for individual consumers, the thirty-six counties comprising the four Our Local Food regions are home to 84% of Kansas residents and 72% of vegetable farms. The estimated number of consumer beneficiaries is 119,359, 5% of the population. Increased specialty crop awareness, production and sales as a result of this project will impact this population in the future, by increasing the quantity of fresh, locally grown produce for these residents.

Lessons Learned

Offer insights into the lessons learned by the project staff as a result of completing this project. Describe the positive and negative results and conclusions for the project. Provide unexpected outcomes or results that were an effect of implementing the project. If goals or outcome measures were not achieved, identify and share the lessons learned to help others expedite problem-solving.

- The coordinators have found that this program is a “tough sell” for businesses. We believe this is due to the overwhelming workload on their buyers, who have limited time for signing up and maintaining their presence in a program like this. Furthermore, businesses expressed that they must see the potential for “payoff” to invest their time, an assurance that is a hard sell for a new program.
- Feedback as to number of new relationships as a result of the new website was difficult to track, but general enthusiasm for the site was high. It is appreciated as a new service available to producers, buyers and consumers across the state. This enthusiasm has been a very pleasant but not totally unexpected surprise.
- We identified community organizing as a next important phase for local foods in Kansas, as we see individual communities across the state become energized around food systems issues. KRV events this year in Marysville and Brown County served as prototypes for this approach.
- The Savor the Season grower component was hampered by great difficulty in rounding up the final pieces from the farmer-educators during the busy growing season. Content was never provided by the farm on the Salad Greens team. The planned outreach activities were very difficult for busy growers to conduct. However, each grower-educator team was able to complete at least one major element (guide or outreach activity) of their work. In addition, working with and gathering data from individual farms proved challenging given the size and scope of all of the other components of this program, so we chose to work with the Farmers Markets as “hubs.”
- Savor the Season consumer materials: Although use of the program was good and the materials were well-received, feedback indicated that these tools would be needed during winter planning to have a more significant impact on diversification of crops. This points to the challenges of a one-year grant program in achieving long-term impact, given time needed to produce materials. Multi-year use of tools and measurement of outcomes would perhaps be more indicative of the program’s true success. Materials were very attractive and very popular, and have been requested after the program’s conclusion, indicating that with long-term use they could have significant impact. We would recommend their re-printing and continued use, if resources could be found to do so.
- A major learning of this project was that it is critical to coordinate development activities and programming activities with farmer growing season. Materials should be produced and distributed through the winter months, or well in advance. Once the growing season begins, typically in March and earlier if growers utilize hoophouses, they are focused on growing and marketing and very hard to engage

in programs. That work tapers off by the end of October, with November, January and February being best months for educational activities. Consumer outreach activities are best accomplished during the market season, making it imperative that any consumer tools be completed before most markets open in March and April.

- It is critical to understand that when working directly with individuals on-farm and in businesses, that relationship-building is an extremely time-intensive process. The size and scope of the planned activities in this project far outstripped the time allotted, both by the length of the project and by the planned staffing. We compensated by eliminating some components from our workplan, such as rapid market assessments, direct one-on-one consultations, and farm-direct Savor the Season promotion. We also implemented new technology tools, such as “Basecamp” project management software, that helped immensely. We worked through farmers market managers as “hubs,” and opted to facilitate relationships through attending regional events and

through the events that we hosted, providing networking opportunities. But, for future reference, if time-intensive relationship-building is central to a proposal, then creation of materials and other time-intensive activity should be kept to a minimum (or vice versa), unless the time and money allotted for the project is significant enough to achieve the objectives.

- Finally, we learned that focusing on fewer but higher-quality events and activities, and enabling coordinators to partner with each other and with more community collaborators, boosted attendance and satisfaction with programming. It also reduced the burden on coordinators so they could focus more on developing quality and lasting relationships, and assisting growers as needed.

Planet to Plate It

Final Report for Specialty Crop Block Grant 1695-2
Agreement 12-25-B-1229

Prepared by Melissa Rose Hodges
Executive Director

6/20/2014

REVISED 10/13/2014

Project Summary

Planet to Plate It was conceived as an integrated approach to develop both Specialty Crop Producers and a shared use commercial kitchen for those producers to be able to make and sell value-added products through a year-round retail market.

Initially, about forty entrepreneurs were identified as interested in starting a food related business. The primary obstacle for entry into food business is the expense of a commercial kitchen. With guidance from the National Business Incubator Association (NBIA), SDI developed the concept of a shared use commercial kitchen, Kitchen 4 Hire (K4H), where entrepreneurs could lease shared space at a reasonable hourly rate.

SDI built additional partnerships to provide valuable expertise for this Specialty Crop project (i.e. Saline County Cooperative Extension Service, Prairieland Market, etc). SDI and partner organizations contacted over twenty SC producers within a fifty-mile radius of Salina. Many SC farmers in the region have limited access to year-round retail markets and many rely only on seasonal farmers' markets. This project focused on the development of a shared use commercial kitchen incubator and a small retail market within the incubator as well as Prairieland Market, a local “healthy food alternative” market.

In addition, the program was to provide education in value-added food products, marketing, business management and Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) and to encourage SCPs to process seasonally abundant produce for marketing year-round. The project objectives focused on unique local SC value-added products, local foods promotion, grower education, and greater public access to local specialty crop foods. This project was designed to increase the competitiveness of specialty crops and create a resilient year-round local market.

The shared use kitchen incubator was designed to help specialty crop producers through:

- 1) Access to a commercial kitchen for SCP's to produce value-added products
- 2) Creation of a brand/incentive program that would promote products using at least 50% local specialty crop ingredients.
- 3) A revolving restaurant space featuring made-to-order food made with SC ingredients.
- 4) A retail location that features and promotes the brand and all SC value-added products, as well as selling and promoting fresh specialty crops.
- 5) Access to training in GAPs, value-added products and small business management.

Project Approach

“Planet to Plate It” was designed to leverage and expand partnerships with Specialty Crop Producers, K-State Cooperative Extension Service, Prairieland Market, North Central Kansas Small Business Development Center, Project Open, Salina Area Chamber of Commerce, City of Salina, Salina Economic Development Incentive Council, Network Kansas, North Central Regional Planning Commission and other organizations and businesses

Salina Downtown, Inc. provided leadership, matching funds, administration, and staffing for the kitchen. Project Open identified about 40 entrepreneurs interested in starting a food related business. The primary obstacle for entry into food business is the expense of a commercial kitchen. With guidance from the National Business Incubator Association (NBIA) manual, SDI developed the shared use commercial kitchen project where entrepreneurs can lease shared space at a reasonable hourly rate. The kitchen is now its own non-profit.

SDI identified an additional need through local direct market research and public meetings about the development of a shared use commercial kitchen incubator: the need for regional specialty crop producers to be able to make and sell value-added products through a year-round retail market. “Planet to Plate It” was a project within the shared use kitchen designed to address that need. SDI built partnerships to provide valuable expertise for this Specialty Crop project (i.e. Saline County Cooperative Extension Service, Prairieland Market, etc). SDI and partner organizations have contacted over 20 SC producers within a 25 mile radius of Salina. The project objectives focused on unique local SC value-added products, local foods promotion, grower education, and greater public access to local specialty crop foods. The goal of the project was to increase the competitiveness of specialty crops and create a resilient year-round local market.

SDI anticipated that about 45% of the kitchen clients will be SC producers. SDI also understood that this shared use commercial kitchen will benefit more commodities than just specialty crops and food entrepreneurs who are not SC producers. However, project staff ensured that the SCBGP funds solely enhanced the competitiveness of specialty crops (SC) through specific monitoring procedures. These procedures included, but are not limited to, requiring all SC producers involved in the project to sign a standardized certification form that includes the type of specialty crop produced, exclusively listing qualified specialty crops on all promotional materials and using specialty crop products as prescribed by the SC brand to be developed.

Original Project Goals and Outcomes Achieved

Goal 1: Develop a local SC certified brand

The commercial kitchen incubator was branded Kitchen 4 Hire (K4H) and a logo was developed by local graphic designer Matt Stewart. Additional marketing has included



- Newspaper advertising
- A page on the Salina Downtown website (<http://www.salinadowntown.org/#!/kitchen-4-hire-/c9r5>)
- Facebook page (facebook.com/Kitchen4Hire67401)
- Guest radio appearances and local speaking engagements,
- Flyers, newsletter articles and e-news articles via the Salina Area Chamber of Commerce and SDI
- SDI budgeted an additional \$1,000 toward K4H marketing in June 2013 and an additional \$750 in 2014 to increase consumer awareness of the brand and the program.

See attachments for examples.

Outcome: Kitchen 4 Hire has an easily recognizable brand and can be found through a variety of internet and social media sites. In the last three months, Kitchen 4 Hire is finally achieving recognition within the community because of this ongoing marketing.

Goal 2: Enlist at least eight SCP Clients by Year Two

The Kitchen 4 Hire Advisory Council, facility manager Joan Barhydt and Salina Downtown, Inc. worked cooperatively to engage the SCP community. June 2014 marks the end of year two; there are four active K4H clients. Three are profiled in the K4H fact sheet (see attachments).

1. Coberly's Bake Shoppe

Roger Coberly produces frozen cookie dough, prepared cookies, cinnamon rolls, pies and other baked goods. He distributes regionally through Water's True Value Hardware and is expanding to various locally-owned specialty stores. His frozen cookie dough is a popular school fundraiser and he has been featured in the local newspaper, the *Salina Journal*. Facebook page: facebook.com/pages/Coberlys_Bake_Shoppe

2. Dub-A-Rub Spice Mixes

Pam Boileau produces meat rubs and has expanded her business into dip mixes. Pam's products are carried in multiple stores in the region. She continues to expand her market and her product line. Salina Downtown, Inc. staff has provided support with logo design.

3. Jade Bakery

Jade Bakery is the most recent K4H client. They specialize in Mexican food and are negotiating with K4H to sell their products commercially out of the K4H facility.

4. Prairieland Market

Prairieland Market volunteers produce weekly items to carry in their organic food market. Items range from wraps and scones to salads and soups. Prairieland Market generally cannot meet the demand of its clients and sells out of its products each week. [Facebook.com/pages/Prairieland_Market](https://www.facebook.com/pages/Prairieland_Market)

Outcome: The fact that K4H produced half the anticipated number of clients by year two was disappointing. Several factors contributed to the slow start and the delay in using the Specialty Crop Block Grant funding:

1. A commercial kitchen facility was not acquired until January 2013
2. Staffing setbacks
 - a. The intern hired to liaison between Specialty Crop producers and the program did not perform and was released
 - b. A licensed kitchen manager, Joan Barhydt, was not hired until June 2014
 - c. Consultant Robin Beans, an instrumental part of developing relationships between SC producers and the kitchen, returned to full-time work and did not have time to recruit
 - d. Salina Downtown, Inc. – the administering organization for this grant – experienced a change in the executive director position. Longtime ED Phyll Klima, who wrote the grant and developed the program, left in September 2013 as K4H was just getting going.

However, the future is looking brighter for Kitchen 4 Hire. With the conclusion of the grant, the Kitchen 4 Hire Advisory Council has formed its own LLC, with Phyll Klima as its president. Robin Beans has resumed part-time employment and has more time to travel and make connections with SC producers. Joan Barhydt continues as K4H manager.

Goal 3: Establish baseline sales volume of value-added specialty crop products

The original application stated a goal of having five SCPs producing at least five total specialty crop products by January 2012; the adjusted timeline will be January 2013. However, despite increased marketing via social media, print, television and radio, Kitchen 4 Hire failed to meet these projections. Currently, K4H has five producing clients and more than five specialty crop products. SDI and K4H track and report sales volume quarterly and review the figures at the monthly advisory council meetings listed above.

Goal 4: 50% increase in SCP Value-Added Products for first five producers

The projected increase of SCP Value-Added Products has been met by one client, Prairieland Market. The corrected timeline for this goal will be May 2014. SDI and K4H will continue to track and report sales volume quarterly and review the figures at monthly meetings.

Goal 5: Enlist at least three additional SCPs in year two

In order to have been self-sustaining prior to June 30, Kitchen 4 Hire would have had to recruit an additional twelve clients. However, Salina Downtown, Inc. negotiated a lease with the Masonic Center Associates which ensures K4H can continue in its present location through March 2015. At that point, it is anticipated that enough additional SCPs will have been added to the program so that it can become self-sufficient.

Goal 6: Provide educational opportunities for SCP producers

Kitchen 4 Hire Advisory Board members and clients have participated in the following activities:

- Toured three established kitchen incubators
 - Ennovation Center, Independence, MO
 - Farm to Table Kitchen, Kansas City, MO
 - Glacial Hills Food Center, Horton, KS
- Attended education programs
 - Recipe to Reality (University of Nebraska-Lincoln Food Technology Center)
 - Kansas Rural Center's Farm to Forks Summits
 - Multiple FEAST and food hub workshops throughout the region
- Developed connections and programs with the following organizations
 - Kansas Rural Center
 - Hosted Salina Public Library's Community Learning and Skills (CLAS) cooking classes
 - KSU Research and Extension Central Kansas District
 - Salina Emergency Aid Food Bank

In addition, clients and SC producers are encouraged to enroll in free and low-cost business classes sponsored by the North Central Small Business Development Commission and held in the same building as Salina Downtown, Inc. Three classes are offered: *The 3 Ms: Money, Marketing and Management*; *Writing a Successful Business Plan*; and *Understanding Cash Flow*. They are taught by Wichita State University business professor Linda Sutton.

Salina Downtown, Inc. staff has also tutored clients in using social media to promote their businesses and products.

Clients and SC producers also have access to SDI's Entrepreneurial Assistance Center. The EAC offers free WIFI, access to a laptop loaded with software like QuickBooks and the Microsoft Office Suite, and printing services.

Indicate how you are monitoring SCBGP funds to ensure that they are used to solely enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops.

SDI followed a strict SCBGP rubric within its QuickBooks system. Specific accounts and classifications were created to monitor income and expenses tied directly to the Planet to Plate It program. Each expense was updated monthly in an Excel spreadsheet and reviewed by an independent accountant

Beneficiaries

There are a variety of beneficiaries from the Planet to Plate It grant funds, including the following:

- Community organizations like the Salina Public Library, the Emergency Aid Food Bank, and the Masonic Center Associates.
 - The Salina Public Library hosted four classes of thirty participants; the Emergency Aid Food Bank hosted two classes with ten participants; and the Masonic Center Associates increased their community profile by the increased traffic through their building.
- Aspiring local food entrepreneurs who require a licensed commercial kitchen to prepare their products, plus the training and support to develop their businesses.
 - Salina Downtown, Inc. and Kitchen 4 Hire staff met with over 25 aspiring food producers during the course of the grant and signed four long-term, financially viable entrepreneurs who have expanded their product lines and distribution.
 - SDI and partner organizations contacted over 20 SC producers within a 25 mile radius of Salina.
- Local businesses who carry the products of the entrepreneurs
 - There are 10 local businesses with a total of approximately 60 employees that carry Kitchen 4 Hire products and another 5-10 regional businesses that carry K4H products.
- The Salina community (population 47,910), surrounding Saline county (population 55,988) and the region (population 293,459) who have access to locally-produced items made with SC products.
 - Prairieland Market, in particular, provides access to patrons who want locally-produced items made with SC products.
 - SDI has not required K4H entrepreneurs to provide sales figures.
- Development of diverse inter-agency cooperation and communication
 - “Planet to Plate It” was supported by Project Open and its seven partnering organizations: North Central Kansas Small Business Development Center, Salina Area Chamber of Commerce, City of Salina, Salina Economic Development Incentive Council, Network Kansas, North Central Regional Planning Commission and Salina Downtown, Inc.
 - Additional partnerships included Saline County Cooperative Extension Service, Prairieland Market, Kansas State University, and the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

Lessons Learned

1. Adequate staffing is critical
 - a. Reliable, consistent staffing is necessary to develop all facets of the program
 - b. SDI's projection of the amount of time needed to develop all facets of the program was unrealistic, given its small staff and the wide scope of work.
 - c. As a result of staff turnover and unrealistic projections, more time was devoted to developing the commercial kitchen incubator as opposed to other aspects of the program.
2. Development of a new program takes time
 - a. The true scope of Planet to Plate It timeline was unrealistic. Coordination between multiple agencies takes time and persistence.
 - b. It took months of work to locate a commercial kitchen; to hire a kitchen manager; and to attract clients.
 - c. It took a year of marketing and promotion for Kitchen 4 Hire to generate consumer awareness.
 - d. It is necessary to have an organization who can (and will) support the grant by helping with cash flow while waiting for reimbursement and who can make additional investments in the program above and beyond the grant proposal.
3. Confirm that the mission of the sponsoring organization is a good fit with the grant proposal.
 - a. Time committed to developing, marketing, and administering the Kitchen 4 Hire program was not a natural fit with Salina Downtown's mission to create a healthy, vibrant downtown community.
4. Attracting committed SC producers was more difficult than expected.
 - a. Regional SC producers are small businesses. They have busy schedules and it's difficult for them to find the time to work in educational programs or make new commitments.
 - b. It takes significant staff time and effort to seek out SC producers and to develop programs that they will make time to participate in.

Contact Information

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Salina, KS 67402-1065

mhodes@salinadowntown.com

785 825-0535 (phone)

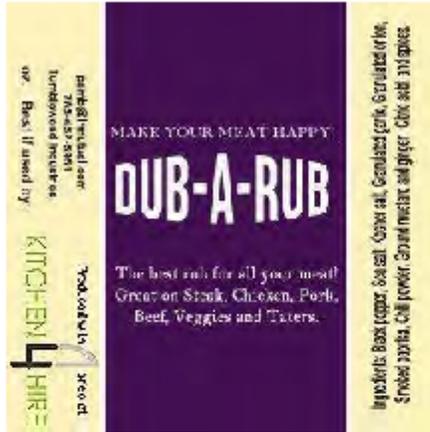
785 825-7216 (fax)

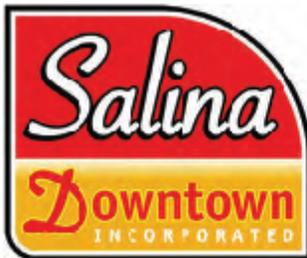
Chad Bontrager
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Topeka, KS 66612

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Attachments

- Materials developed
- Press received





Seeking food entrepreneurs for our culinary incubator kitchen program

KITCHEN 4 HIRE

From RECIPE to REALITY

WE ARE ALWAYS
OPEN

Kitchen 4 Hire fits any schedule. Our clients have 24/7 access. Reservations are required.

INFO AVAILABLE

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CALL

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WRITE

kitchen4hire@gmail.com

MEET

let's take a tour!

WE ARE CELEBRATING
OUR FIRST

BIRTHDAY

Established in early 2013 by Salina Downtown Inc, Kitchen 4 Hire provides low-cost access to a professional-grade commercial kitchen.



Why wait any longer to develop your ideas? I'm here to help guide you through the process!



Kitchen 4 Hire manager Joan Barhydt

If you've always thought mom's candy recipe could make you a millionaire or that your secret barbecue sauce could lead to a catering business, it's time to pursue your dreams in our commercial kitchen facility, Kitchen 4 Hire.

Funded in part by a USDA grant, Kitchen 4 Hire, located in Salina's Masonic Center at 336 S. Santa Fe, offers twenty-four access to a fully-equipped and licensed commercial kitchen.

K4H provides you with a space where your products can be developed and produced for sale to enable your dream business to become reality. It's also a great location where community partners can conduct educational food preparation workshops.

Kitchen 4 Hire's manager, Joan Barhydt, has over twenty years experience in catering; menu planning; and food preparation. She's an invaluable resource for issues ranging from licensing and inspections to labeling your product. Contact Joan by calling 785 452-3440 or emailing kitchen4hire336@gmail.com. Information is also available on the Salina Downtown, Inc. website: salinadowntown.com.

TASTE OUR SUCCESS!



Prairieland Market

Prairieland Market features local and sustainable food. Volunteers prepare foods each week – from wraps to lasagna – for sale in their store at 305 East Walnut.



Coberly's Bake Shoppe

Roger Coberly bakes his premium cookies by the hundreds at the Kitchen 4 Hire facility. Coberly Bake Shoppe cookies are carried at Water's True Value stores throughout the state.



Dub-A-Rub Spice Rubs & Mixes

Pam Boileau creates a variety of meat rubs and seasonings – as well as dip mixes. Dub-A-Rub products are featured at The Market Shop and Ad Astra Books & Coffee.

Salina Downtown, Inc. | 120 West Ash | P.O. Box 1065 | Salina, Kansas 67402-1065 | 785.825.0535 T | 785.825.0561 F | www.salinadowntown.com

Seeking food entrepreneurs for our culinary incubator program!



KITCHEN 4 HIRE

WE ARE ALWAYS OPEN
 Kitchen 4 Hire fits any schedule. Our clients have 24/7 access. Reservations are required.

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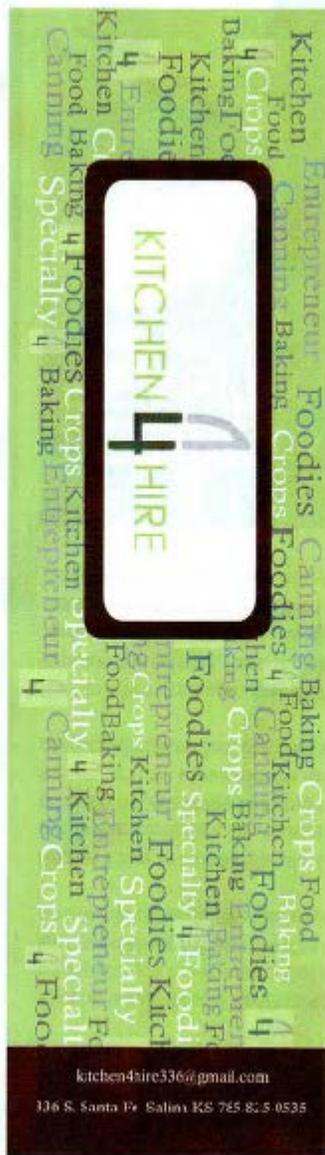
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If you've always thought mom's candy recipe could make you a millionaire or that your secret barbecue sauce could lead to a catering business, it's time to pursue your dreams in our commercial kitchen facility, Kitchen 4 Hire.

.....

Our kitchen manager Joan Barhydt can guide you through the process of starting your own food business.

Current clients include
PrairieLand Market
Coberly's Bake Shoppe
Dub-A-Rub Rubs & Mixes



Start your own food business!
Rent a commercial kitchen
by the hour!

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YOUR space in
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Rente Una Cocina Comercial Por Hora

Llame **HOY** Para Reservar **SU** Espacio

En Kitchen 4 Hire

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785-452-3440

Realizing your dream can come true!

If you've always thought your cookies could make you a millionaire or your secret recipes could lead to a catering business, it will no longer be the expense of establishing a commercial kitchen that stops you from pursuing your dream in Salina. Kitchen 4 Hire is waiting for you! Call today to reserve your space in Kitchen 4 Hire.



Kitchen 4 Hire | 336 S. Santa Fe | kitchen4hire336@gmail.com | 785-825-0535

VOLUNTEER-O-METER



Number of hours volunteered YTD Total

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION

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SDI

Downtown News

By Melissa Rose Hedges, Executive Director, Salina Downtown, Inc.
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CALLING ALL COOKS!

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KITCHEN 4 HIRE

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785 825-0535 OR 785 452-3440

WRITE

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MEET

for a tour of our licensed commercial kitchen in the Masonic Center
336 South Santa Fe

KITCHEN 4 HIRE

A project of Salina Downtown, Inc.



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Melissa Rose Hodges
Salina Downtown, Inc.
Executive Director

Sample Chamber of Commerce
123 Main Street
Anytown, Kansas 12345

January 20, 2014

Dear _____,

Happy Ring in the New Year by helping local entrepreneurs grow their business and your community!

We're contacting you to share an incredible business opportunity with food entrepreneurs in the Anytown area. For three years, Salina dared to dream of opening a licensed, commercial kitchen for aspiring food entrepreneurs, but in February 2013, that dream became a reality when Salina Downtown, Inc. opened Kitchen 4 Hire.

Kitchen 4 Hire, located in the Salina Masonic Center at 336 South Santa Fe, is available 24/7 to help entrepreneurs launch their food-related business. We have been successful in attracting several clients and being a food resource for Salina organizations. Knowing that there are many "food of dreamers" in neighboring communities, we're asking for your help to spread the word.

Our mission is to provide access to an environment within for food entrepreneurs growing their business and for community partners educating their clients and the public about healthy food preparation. Our services include access to a licensed commercial kitchen and its equipment. Our manager, Joan Barhydt, is ready to share her knowledge by guiding clients through the steps required for starting a food-related business, and networking with food-related resources.

We appreciate your help distributing the enclosed flyer to interested, aspiring or established food entrepreneurs in Anytown. More information is available at salinadowntown.com, or Facebook (Kitchen4Hire67401) or via email at kitchen4hire336@gmail.com.

With your help, this innovative business opportunity can have a major regional economic impact. We look forward to hearing from food entrepreneurs in your area!

Sincerely,

Joan Barhydt,
Kitchen 4 Hire Manager

Melissa Rose Hodges
Executive Director
Salina Downtown, Inc.

Salina Downtown, Inc., 120 West Ash | P.O. Box 1065 | Salina, Kansas 67402-1065 | 785.825.0535 | 785.825.7216 | www.salinadowntown.com