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2011 Specialty Crop Block Grant Program
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2011 New Hampshire State Plan
Final Report
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Submitted by the
New Hampshire Department of Agriculture, Markets & Food
In cooperation with selected Project Partners

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New Hampshire State Final Report 2011 Specialty Crop Block Grant Program

The New Hampshire Dept. of Agriculture, Markets & Food received funding under the 2011 Special Crop Block Grant Program in October 2011. Ten projects were approved for funding. All projects have been completed and individual project reports follow.

Project 1

Project Title: *Soil Health Management Plan Development and In-Field Education, Implementation, and Documentation*

Applicant: Merrimack County Conservation District

Final Report

Project Summary

The Soil Health Management Plan Development and In-Field Education, Implementation, and Documentation project aimed to advance integrated and adaptive soil health management for improved productivity, energy efficiency, climate change adaptation and mitigation, and water quality in NH by providing more standardized guidance for soil health management decisions for NH vegetable farms.

This was accomplished by the following:

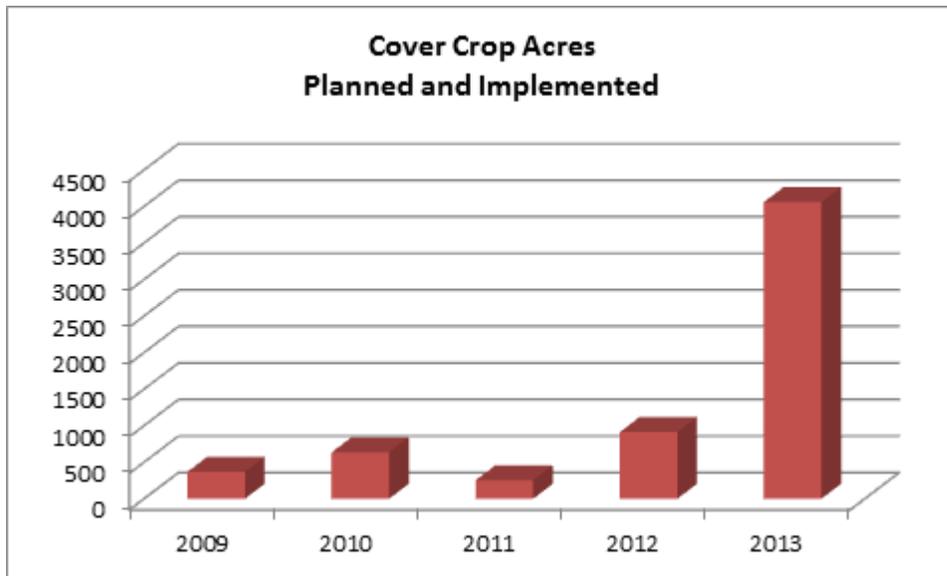
1. Developing standards and a template for a Soil Health Management Plan (SHMP) which would complement Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plans (CNMP), Grading Plans and other conservation Activity Plans (CAP).
2. Providing technical assistance, including key equipment, to cooperators to facilitate implementation of EQIP practices that are in line with addressing identified soil health constraints, and/ or maintaining soil health on fields newly put into production.
3. Documenting baseline and on-going results scientifically, as well as photographically, for web site and public relations materials (including soil health tests, pictures of soil profiles, pictures of no-till equipment and cover crops).
4. Strengthening cooperation and networks between producers, NH's conservation districts, GreenStart, NRCS, the University of New Hampshire and Cornell University, to enable future collaboration on applied producer-oriented research and technology implementation.

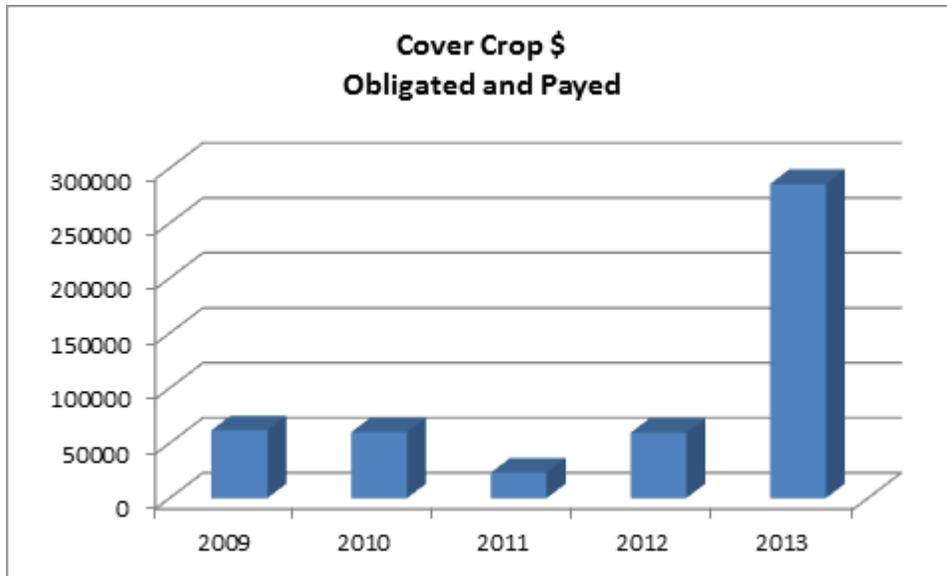
This project was important and timely due to NRCS and the conservation district's utilization of comprehensive soil analyses and focus on a holistic view of improving soil health. As cost-share

assistance was available to specialty crop producers, farmers needed assistance and information on how best to utilize this soil health analyses. Also, this project assisted the partners in identifying the next steps and what was needed to assist farmers in implementing strategies and best management practices to improve soil health for better productivity and profitability. This project did not build on previously funded grants.

Project Approach

This project relied heavily on county conservation districts, GreenStart NH director Dorn Cox, and the technical expertise of Dr. Bianca Moebius-Clune, formerly Extension Associate in the Department of Crop and Soil Sciences at Cornell University. In this project, a baseline of vegetable farm productivity was created using a Cornell Soil Health Test, interviews, and farm visits. Then a Soil Health Management Plan was developed for each of the farms. The team then provided technical assistance, equipment and educational opportunities to assist in plan implementation. Following this, interviews were conducted with each of the farms to establish productivity gains and qualitative feedback on what would happen next. Significant outreach occurred to specialty crop producers state-wide on soil health. One desired outcome in this project was to increase cover cropping in the state as a means of improving soil health. The bar graphs below show the dramatic increase in cover crop acres planned and implemented and NH NRCS cost-share dollar increases at the end of this grant.





Each of the actions in the Work Plan was completed and additional workshops have continued into the Fall of 2014 based on interest from producers. These workshops were done state-wide with no-till and cover crop expert Joel Myers from Pennsylvania.

Project partners performed the following roles in this project:

Stacy L. Luke, Project Manager, Merrimack County Conservation District managed the grant, received deliverables from all project partners, facilitated workshops, and did the accounting tasks for this project.

Dorn Cox, Director of GreenStart, coordinated his work and the work of Dr. Moebius-Clune. Dr. Cox also spoke at many educational workshops, performed interviews with the producers, and followed up with NRCS staff, Dr. Richard Smith, and other partners on quantifying project success.

Dr. Leonard Lord, Victoria Stafford, and Amanda Littleton of the Rockingham, Strafford, and Cheshire County Conservation Districts, respectively, conducted educational programs, producer interviews, and provided feedback for next steps.

Dr. Bianca Moebius-Clune created the soil health management plans, established the base-line data, interview producers, and provide follow-up technical assistance to the producers. The soil health management plans are being used as a model for potential replication as a Conservation Activity Plan via USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service cost-share programs. The program also informed Cornell University of what information was most important to producers and what technical assistance they needed to implement the plans.

The beneficiaries of this project were fruit and vegetable growers in New Hampshire looking to improve soil health and productivity through a detailed soil health plan and continued technical assistance. Each of the producers receiving a soil health plan was a specialty crop producer.

Goals and Outcomes Achieved

The following goals and outcomes were achieved:

1. Documenting baseline of vegetable farm productivity: The baseline for vegetable farm productivity and their baseline soil health was assessed through Cornell Soil Health Testing, interviews, and economic data.
2. Developing standards and a template for a Soil Health Management Plan: Standards and a working template were created. An example is included in the Additional Information.
3. Providing Technical Assistance, Equipment and Educational Opportunities: The project team provided technical assistance to all participating farmers, provided educational opportunities to those farmers and all other farmers and technical services providers interested, and some equipment was made available from the Strafford and Cheshire County Conservation Districts though more equipment and different types of equipment were found to be in need.

Project partners and Bianca Moebius-Clune performed surveys (paper/ SurveyMonkey surveys and personal interviews) of the project participants as well as participants who went to the workshops. Included in this report are results from the respondents who used the paper survey. The paper survey template has also been included. 100% of the project participants were surveyed and responded to either through the paper/ SurveyMonkey survey or through personal interviews with Dr. Moebius-Clune. In these surveys, it was found that all have incorporated something in their SHMP whether it is changes in the nutrients applied, reduced tillage, cover cropping, or the use of available equipment such as no till seeders, aerways, or subsoilers. Most would like to do more in their plans but have prioritized other improvement activities and their available capital in other areas at this time. Many participants also learned of USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service cost-share programs and applied of which some of these participants were able to get assistance in cover crops.

Workshop participants who did not get a SHMP also were surveyed but only @50% of those participants responded. These surveys helped project participants plan future soil health workshops and projects.

4. Document vegetable farm productivity post Soil Health Management Plan implementation: Follow up interviews and assessments were done in late 2013/ early 2014 along with additional technical assistance. Because of the short time between the producer receiving the SHMP, implementing the strategies (whether small or large), and surveys along with extraneous factors such as weather, project partners are still working with project participants to ascertain increases in farm productivity. Currently the baseline and one year of data has been gathered, but this will continue to be taken as project partners continue to work on this project. Conservation Districts and NRCS continue to work with these farms as their models for soil health. At this time, definitive farm productivity data is still in process.

5. Strengthen logistical and technical Cooperation and Networks: This is probably the most important goal and outcome achieved. This project helped bring together Cornell University, UNH Cooperative Extension, NH's county conservation districts, and producers to focus on soil health and its subsequent soil productivity. Several workshops have occurred from various entities and producers are talking to each other about soil health best management practices, equipment sharing, cover cropping, no till technology, and the use of amendments to improve soil health. The use of soil health as a means to increase production for specialty crops is now becoming a common conversation amongst NH agriculture.

See Appendix for survey information.

Beneficiaries

The beneficiaries of this project were fruit and vegetable growers in New Hampshire looking to improve soil health and productivity through a detailed soil health plan and continued technical assistance. Each of the producers receiving a soil health plan was a specialty crop producer.

The specialty crop producers include:

- a. Moor Farm, Exeter, NH
- b. The Vegetable Ranch, Warner, NH
- c. Red Manse Farm, Loudon, NH
- d. Brookford Farm, Canterbury, NH
- e. Webster River Organics, Webster, NH
- f. Tuckaway Farm, Lee, NH
- g. Coppel House Farm, Lee, NH
- h. Emery Farm, Durham, NH
- i. Stout Oak Farm, Brentwood, NH
- j. Wild Miller Gardens, Lee, NH
- k. Heron Pond Farm, South Hampton, NH
- l. Fresh Start Farms, Dunbarton, NH

Through numerous educational programs throughout this project each workshop garnered an average of 25 participants. Over 225 participants attended the soil health workshops.

Lessons Learned

- Farmers valued the information given to them in the Soil Health Conservation Activity Plans but many did not have the available resources (money, equipment, time, etc.) to implement the recommendations in the plans.
- Farmers may need reminders to implement soil health activities during the right time frames though technology resources such as emails and text messages. This is an aspect that Dr. Moebius-Clune and Cornell University Extension were working on as a result of the project.
- Farmers are interested in finding ways to improve soil health but need incentives to implement them, such as NRCS cost-share assistance or other grant funded demonstrations/ assistance.

- Farmers need more access to shared equipment such as no-till seed drills, lime spreaders, and even hand tools like broadforks and penetrometers.
- NRCS and other partners are committed to soil health and partnerships are needed to meet the interest and demand.
- A financial analysis should be made to show the monetary increases in specialty crop sales tied to increased use of soil health management practices.

Unexpected outcomes include the dramatic increase in NRCS signups for Cornell Soil Health tests and cost share programs for covercropping. It was also unexpected how much farmers would need equipment such as aerways and subsoilers to reduce compaction as well as the need for soil amendments.

All goal and outcome measures were achieved. Our work has led to continued work by partners, including a National Conservation Innovation Grant. This project helped lead the way for continued program growth.

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Additional Information

See Appendix

Project 2

Project Title: *Monadnock Region Farm to School Pilot Program*

Applicant: Cheshire County Conservation District
 University of New Hampshire Cooperative Extension

Final Report

Project Summary

A Farm to School Pilot Program was established to provide higher demands for New Hampshire Specialty Crops, specifically fruits and vegetables, and was started in partnership with the Cheshire County Conservation District, University of New Hampshire Cooperative Extension, Monadnock region schools and specialty crop farmers. This Pilot Program was modeled after the successful University of Vermont Extension Program – Windham Farm and Food Network.

Keep Farmlands in Farming is a New England Farm & Food Security Initiative (NEFFSI) convened to strengthen New England’s food system and improve the region’s economy, environment, and public health. In July 2010, the Blue Ribbon Commission on Land Conservation, a standing commission of the New England Governors Conference, published the 2010 Report to the Governors that stated “New England agriculture is today at a most promising

crossroad. Surging demand for local food is providing exciting new market opportunities. Growing obesity rates and the lack of access to healthy and affordable food for many of the region's residents foster new partnerships between the agricultural and public health communities to combat food deserts and increase the availability of local fruit and vegetables in schools and other institutions." As Farm to School programs gain momentum on a national scale, New Hampshire's specialty crop farmers have an opportunity to help make more fruits and vegetables available to children at school every day. The purpose of the Monadnock Region Farm to School Pilot Program was to connect farmers with schools and institutions as a way of promoting and marketing NH Specialty Crops to a new market and building lasting connections between school children and NH specialty farmers.

NEFFSI has identified farm to institution as one of the six focus areas for agricultural service providers and communities to work on in upcoming years, and they have identified "Continued capacity building for Farm to School programming, networking, information services, and technical assistance in the region," as an identified project. The Monadnock Region Farm to School Pilot Program has built the capacity for NH farm to school and farm to institution programming.

UVM Extension in Windham County Vermont has established a successful web based program called Windham Farm and Food (WFF). WFF is a not-for-profit, farmer-owned, UVM Extension supported, produce delivery service for wholesale buyers in the Windham County area that has facilitated a Farm to Institution program. We have modeled the Monadnock Region's Farm to School Pilot Program on this success. This pilot project sought to diversify and increase specialty crop offerings at institutions in the Monadnock Region. Project partners adapted WFF to meet the needs of the Monadnock Region and created a successful web-based Farm to School program accessible for adaptation throughout New Hampshire.

Project Approach

The Monadnock Region Farm to School Pilot Project took place over the course of two years. This was a change from the initial one year timeline. The project team realized we needed more time to build a strong foundation for the wholesale buying network. There were also some staff changes that slowed the project. The pilot started in May of 2012 and ended in February of 2014. The project included the following tasks in 2012:

- The project coordinator was selected and project planning meetings were held with the planning team, including Amanda Littleton of the Cheshire County Conservation District, Carl Majewski of UNH Cooperative Extension, and Hans Estrin of UVM Extension.
- The project coordinator with the guidance and assistance of the project planning team began networking with institutional buyers and farms to inquire about their interest in participating in the pilot.
- Schools, institutions, and farms were selected to participate in the pilot based on interest and willingness of staff to cooperate. Participating schools and institutions were informally surveyed on the volume of specialty crop products they currently purchase locally, and participating farms were also informally surveyed on what quantity of products they sell to schools and institutions.

- The project coordinator worked with Harvest to Market Online to set up a website for the Monadnock Region program. The coordinator then worked with farms to create their own vendor page on the site and taught vendors and buyers how to use the site on a one on one basis.
- The project coordinator with guidance from the planning team and Cheshire County Conservation District Board contracted with a lawyer to create contracts for our transportation contractor as well as for buyers and sellers.
- The coordinator worked to establish a good working relationship with our transportation contractor – Westminster Organic, LLC.
- A name, logo, domain name, and tag line for the project was selected and this branding has been utilized on all promotional materials for the project. The name selected is Monadnock Menus, tagline is “Getting Local on the Menu” , and the domain name is www.monadnockmenus.org.
- Multiple press releases and email news blasts to the Conservation District network have been created and distributed to create public awareness of the project and encourage more buyers and sellers to participate in the pilot. Multiple stories have been done in local and regional news outlets.
- The project coordinator accomplished the following weekly tasks during the weeks of the open market: farmer communications and inventory management, buyer communications and follow up, weekly delivery assistance, and accounting and banking. Amanda Littleton, Hans Estrin, and Carl Majewski have been working with the project coordinator to support them on an as need basis.
- During 2012 the online marketplace for Monadnock Menus was open for 10 weeks of possible sales starting with the first delivery on October 3rd. We had orders and delivered 7 weeks of the ten with sales totaling \$2435.67 and averaging \$243.57/wk. We averaged 73 miles and 3.5 hours of delivery time.
- The project coordinator closed the market the week of December 10th for the winter season. This was a result of low specialty crop farmer participation and lack of specialty crop inventory.

2013 was the second year of activity for this project. Please find below an account of the activities performed and goals achieved in 2013 for the Monadnock Region Farm to School Pilot Program, which will be referred to as Monadnock Menus.

- On January 29, 2013 a meeting was organized by the project coordinator and partners to bring together Monadnock Menus’ buyers and sellers to discuss the sales platform used for the first seven weeks of sales in 2012. This meeting was an opportunity to create a forum where relationships could be strengthened between buyers and sellers, feedback could be given to staff on best ways to troubleshoot problems with the Monadnock Menus program, and a team atmosphere could be created to inspire new enthusiasm to move the project forward in 2013.
- On the morning of January 29, 2013 fruit and vegetable producers that are also registered sellers through Monadnock Menus were invited to attend a training session with UVM

- Extension and UNH Extension that focused on food safety planning. Participants were given models and worked on creating tailored food safety plans for their farm operation.
- Additional marketing materials were created for Monadnock Menus. The Project Coordinator with input from partners created a tri-fold brochure that outlines the program. A point of sale poster was also created for wholesale food buyers to display for their customers. Decals were also purchased to give to Monadnock Menus members to display for their patrons. Multiple press releases and email news blasts to the Conservation District network have been created and distributed to create public awareness of the project and encourage more buyers and sellers to participate in the pilot. Multiple stories have been done in local and regional news outlets such as the Keene Sentinel and Monadnock Shopper.
 - Beyond external marketing materials the Project Coordinator also created materials that will help with buyer and seller recruitment and registration. A folder titled a Buyer Packet and a folder titled a Seller Packet were compiled and included instructions on registering on www.monadnockmenus.org as well defined the needed insurance information, and contained the appropriate contract that needed to be filled out. The Project Coordinator worked on buyer and seller recruitment and as a result there were 15 registered buyers and 20 farmers and food producers registered as sellers at the close of this project in 2014. The Project Coordinator with support from the District Manager of the CCCD also expanded outreach by working with interns and contractors on sales for Monadnock Menus.
 - The Project Coordinator accomplished the following weekly tasks during the weeks of the open market: farmer communications and inventory management, buyer communications and follow up, weekly delivery assistance, and accounting and banking.
 - In 2013, the online marketplace for Monadnock Menus was open for 31 weeks of possible sales starting with the first delivery on May 15, 2013. In 2013 we had orders and delivered 23 weeks with sales totaling \$3,052.42 for a total of 1,438 lbs of food.
 - In December 2013 interviews were done with all of the registered buyers for Monadnock Menus. This was done to assess their involvement in the program. This information was used to improve our service as well as to help shape the 2014 Monadnock Menus buyers and sellers forum.

The pilot continued into the beginning of 2014, concluding in mid-February. During this time the following activities occurred:

- The annual Monadnock Menus buyers and sellers forum was held on February 4, 2014 and there were twenty five people in attendance. John Ayer, from Brattleboro Union High School was a guest speaker to share his tips on how to make local food a work in a school cafeteria. He is a great champion for local specialty crops and is committed to buying 100% local potatoes, and apples, and purchases lettuce, berries, and other seasonal produce as often as possible. The project team also invited Charlene Anderson of the NH Community Loan Fund to attend and speak at the forum. Anderson shared that there is a new Farm Food Initiative at the loan fund and they are looking to partner with Monadnock Menus

producers to provide technical and capital assistance. At this forum the project management team learned that there is a diversity of both buyers and sellers who have different needs, preferences, opportunities, and challenges to participating in Monadnock Menus. A one size fits all approach will not work, but there remains great opportunity to connect buyers and sellers in the region. There was expressed appreciation for the consolidated inventory and billing that Monadnock Menus offers while still maintaining the ability to keep direction relationships between producers and buyers.

- On February 6, 2014 Monadnock Menus partnered with the Monadnock Farm and Community Coalition to hold a Farm to School Forum for the region at Heberton Hall in Keene NH. Over seventy people were in attendance. This included teachers, parents, school nurses, school food service directors, and other interested community members. The goal of this event was to develop a robust farm to school movement in the Monadnock Region. There was a panel discussion of local educators and food service directors and small group working sessions for participants. Out of this event an Education Working group was formed through the coalition to focus on farm to school opportunities.
- There were additional products beyond specialty crops included in the aggregation and delivery service. The project management team decided to include two dairy offerings and some baked goods as it made purchasing from Monadnock Menus more attractive for institutional buyers. They were asking for a wider range of products if they were going to take the time to order. Our outreach efforts to add new farmers focused solely on specialty crops and the entire program was marketed around getting more fresh fruits and vegetables in schools and other institutions.

Goals and Outcomes Acheived

Our goal for this Monadnock Region Farm to School Pilot Program as outlined in the proposal was to have more local specialty crops served in schools and institutions. In the proposal for this grant we indicated that our goal was for ten schools and/or institutions to work with a network of fifteen local specialty crop farms to increase the amount of locally produced fruits and vegetables that will be provided to students/clients over the course of one year. During the execution of this pilot there has been an increase in local specialty crops served in the participating schools and institutions and we have exceeded the targeted number of registered buyers and sellers participating in the pilot. The biggest challenge that we have faced in the execution of the work plan for the Monadnock Menus pilot is that the buying levels have been lower than anticipated. This has prevented us of getting to our proposed target of raising local food purchases to 5% of participating buyers. Though, we have missed our target of increasing the buying of participating schools and institutions to 5%. The sales volume has been too low for us to hit this target. One reason we have fallen short of our goals is that not all registered buyers and sellers are actively buying or buying in a consistent manner. As a corrective action the project management team decided to take was to hire on additional interns and contractors to help with sales during the last couple months of the pilot. This did not raise sales for the pilot but it did help lay a good foundation for sales in 2014. The final sales numbers for Monadnock Menus/ Monadnock Region Farm to School pilot was \$6,544.01. The target goal that was set for 2014 was \$50,000 in sales through Monadnock Menus. Based on the strong foundation this pilot

project laid we were able to exceed our target sales in 2014 and to date (11/21/14) we have over \$53,000 in sales. Our target for 2015 is \$100,000 in sales.

Beneficiaries

The direct beneficiaries of this project are the eleven specialty crop farmers that participated and successfully sold product during the pilot. Though, the long range impact of Monadnock Menus will offer greater market opportunity for all interested specialty crop producers in the region. A second group of beneficiaries are the school children and clients of other participating institutions that now have access to fresh, healthy fruits and vegetables from regional farms.

Lessons Learned

During the Farm to School pilot we have learned a great deal about our growers and the institutions in our community and the best ways for them to form mutually beneficial business relationships. One bias we needed to overcome going into this project was that the buyers were at a level of readiness to start purchasing and that the farmers were not. During our initial planning for the pilot we anticipated needing to spend more time working with specialty crop farmers to show the benefits of trying a wholesale market. The majority of fruit and vegetable producers in our region have little or no experience in selling wholesale. To our surprise we learned that the farmers willingness to try this new market was high and some just needed guidance on packaging, pricing, and food safety. On the other hand we anticipated encountering little resistance when trying to register wholesale buyers to pilot program. This is because many wholesale food buyers said they would like to buy local, were clamoring for local in some cases, but needed some barriers to be removed to make the switch. The online ordering, aggregation and delivery 1x a week, and simplification of invoices that Monadnock Menus provides removed these barriers for institutional buyers. Despite the removal of these barriers buyers were still reluctant to start buying or to buy regularly. This was an unanticipated challenge in the project and a great deal of coordination time had to be focused on sales and working one on one with buyers.

These are the school challenges we see restricting the future development of a farm to institution program:

- Schools have limited budgets & little flexibility within their budget
- Understaffing creates more work for their Food Service Director giving less time for ordering
- Menus are created a month ahead of time
- Some Food Service Directors are overwhelmed by new Federal Nutritional demands
- Little staff to prepare fresh, local food
- Packaging and amounts need to be clear
- Habits are difficult to change
- Trust that supply will be there at their price point

The challenges are not all on the buyers side, most growers in our community are not set up for wholesale selling. They are smaller farms and have developed markets in the form of direct selling such as: Farmstands, CSAs, and Farmer's Markets. Although some are interested in growing their wholesale market they are apprehensive about directing funds into an unsure

market without a contract or commitment to buy. The way produce is offered on the web sales platform varies a great deal between farms which also make it challenging for buyers. Overall we believe that Monadnock Menus will continue to overcome these challenges through strong communication between buyers and sellers and the establishment of an advisory board of participating Monadnock Menus buyers and sellers to guide the management team. We are optimistic about the future of Monadnock Menus beyond this Farm to School pilot and are confident it will continue to grow and serve our community for years to come.

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Project 3

Project Title: *Snow Peas in Snow Country: Growing and Marketing Specialty Crops in New Hampshire*

Applicant: Small and Beginner Farmers of New Hampshire

Final Report

Project Summary

Small and Beginner Farmers of New Hampshire (SBFNH) organized a series of ten workshops for growers to increase the production, quality and marketing of specialty crops in New Hampshire. This was the organization's first experience with Specialty Crop Block Grants.

Our first task was to educate ourselves and our members as to what specialty crops are. We were pleased to learn nearly everything we grow in our state is a specialty crop due to our topography, climate, soils and amount of land available for agriculture. Our proximity to Boston and a robust tourist industry means specialty crops are natural agricultural products for NH farmers.

At the time the project began most of our members had been engaged in homestead or small scale farming. Many were ready to take the next step in getting serious about their agricultural and business objectives. We shaped this project around their specific concerns, expressed to us via e-mail, our online discussion group, in county meetings and personal discussion.

Project Approach

Throughout the project we used the workshops, newsletters, online e-mail discussion group and even our publicity flyers and press releases to provide examples and growing information for crops such as winter greens, ethnic produce and other specialty crops underutilized in NH. We used the same approach to educate growers about optimal business management, marketing, tax and accounting practices.

We exceeded all of the goals in our work plan. Using a variety of collaborations we were able to expand the statewide and regional workshops from five or six to a total of eleven.

One of our first goals was to encourage growers to broaden their vision beyond the traditional tomatoes and corn. The initial workshop, newsletter articles, publicity and website information introduced growers to the concept of specialty crops, emphasized their importance to NH's

agricultural economy and described specific non-traditional specialty crops of proven interest to consumers in similar markets in the Northeast.

The nine regional workshops taught practical skills for successful production and marketing of specific specialty crops and business and accounting skills tailored to growers. Topics covered included growing winter greens in the northern, mountainous region of our state; business management; farm tax, accounting and recordkeeping and a two-day, hands-on farm energy event using biodigestion to produce heat and hot water for greenhouses, packing sheds and seedling houses.

The final one-day workshop covered marketing of specialty crops, including the benefits of branding to a growing operation.

Throughout the project information was distributed in hard copy, via e-mailings and on our website and online discussion list. Each workshop was accompanied by a minimum of two newsletter articles describing the specialty crop concepts, growing information or specific business skills covered in each event. Publicity flyers and press releases described the concepts, objectives, specific skills to be mastered, and speakers' backgrounds and, when appropriate, the agricultural venue hosting each event.

We could not have achieved and exceeded our project goals without the teamwork of our project supporters at UNH Co-operative Extension who provided consultation, advice and publicity; local growers and speakers such as Vermont's Joe Buley of Vermont, who went the extra mile for our North Country growers; community organizations such as Christ UM Church which donated space; and local newspapers and agricultural organizations such as NH's county conservation districts which helped publicize events.

Goals and Outcomes Achieved

We met or exceeded each of our expected measurable outcomes, as follows:

Goal One: Kick-off workshop

Target: We expected to achieve a goal of at least 27 participants and expected at least 17 of them to complete both pre- and post-questionnaires.

Outcome: Fifty one people attended. At least 33 completed evaluations, with nearly all questions answered with 4-5 on a 1 to 5 scale of satisfaction.

Goal Two: Two to four regional, skills-based workshops focused on one or two specialty crops or techniques for intensive cultivation of specialty crops.

Target: We expected to achieve a goal of at least 6 participants in Coos County and 15 in other regions of the state.

Outcome: We held nine workshops all over the state, including one attended by 27 people in Coos County. Attendance at the remaining workshops varied from over 50 (held the same day as our annual meeting) to a handful (held during a regular county meeting). Twenty-six people gathered at a members' farm for a two day workshop on using anaerobic composting to generate energy. These events were all enthusiastically received, with at least 80% of attendees completing evaluations. Evaluations were across-the-board positive.

Goal Three: Marketing Specialty Crops workshop to educate growers about marketing skills and strategies they can implement to sell their specialty crops.

Target: We expected to achieve a goal of at least 30 participants.

Outcome: Thirty two people attended, most of whom completed evaluations. Most evaluations gave 5 to the speakers, out of a possible 1-5.

Goal Four: Six expanded length articles in SBFNH newsletter detailing project-related information.

Target: We expected to achieve a goal of at least four articles during the project. We expected the articles will be read by at least 550 people per article.

Outcome: All but one of our eleven workshops was covered in two articles. Several were covered three times. Our mailing list has grown from 300 to 450 during the course of this project. Given the industry standard of 2.5 readers per issue and the fact the newsletter is widely distributed in various state, county, local and USDA waiting rooms statewide, we exceeded our goal of 550 readers per issue.

Goal Five: SBFNH will post and maintain on its website issues of each newsletter for members' use and a final report detailing workshop information for non-member growers and other interested users.

Target: We expected 200 people would read the articles and reports online.

Outcome: Each newsletter is distributed to 300-450 recipients via MailChimp and by US Postal Service at the time of publication. Publication of each issue and its contents is announced on our 350-member e-mail discussion list. Newsletters are posted in the Members' area of our website for members' use over time. All project reports will be archived on the site. Recipients open the MailChimp notification a consistent 45% each issue.

See appendix, Project 3 for samples of project support materials

Beneficiaries

We reached over 2,800 farmers through this two-year project. We used the newsletters and flyers as specialty crop promotional and educational tools at agricultural events such as the NH Farm and Forest Expo, NOFA-NH Winter Conference, SBFNH County meetings and in feed and grain stores and agricultural service providers' offices statewide. At the Farm and Forest Expo we reached several hundred members of the general public, many of whom took newsletters and informational flyers. One of the major effects of this project was a noticeable increase in growers' understanding of what specialty crops are and their importance to NH agriculture.

The breakdown is as follows

- Workshop attendees: 215
- Attendees' estimates of numbers of people with whom they expected to share project information: 100
- Newsletters: 4,800, of which at least 600 are repeat readers absorbing the information on increasingly deeper levels over time. Average distribution of 400 bimonthly to members and agricultural partners (industry standard is 2.5 readers/issue); six issues per year for two years X 400 = 4,800.
- Newsletters given out at events: 400
- Website visitors 1,200 over two years.

Lessons Learned

Very few people attending the kick-off workshop for this project knew what a specialty crop is, why they are important and how they fit into New Hampshire's agricultural economy. Our

organization is committed to helping specialty crop growers now in a way we never would have been without the information provided by this project.

As we developed the regional workshops we became aware that our county leaders need training in leadership skills to make their jobs easier and to enable them to recruit new members on an ongoing basis. Few leaders, for example, send out a press release to their local papers to inform them of upcoming meetings. We realize attendance at the regional meetings would have been greater had there been more local publicity.

On the state level, this project has enabled SBFNH to become more visible and increased its capacity to serve NH's small and beginning farmers. Our work has been hindered, however, by a lack of cohesiveness and clarity in our communication. The final marketing workshop pointed out the many ways in which our lack of branding and focus hinders our efforts in communicating the project's activities, useful information and underlying concepts. Our flyers have one specific brand, the newsletter another and the website yet another.

In short, we are in need of a total overhaul of our communications. Cohesive branding would streamline our efforts to educate growers about the skills required to be successful growers of specialty crops. Growers frequently praise our workshops and equipment pool. Comprehensive branding would enable an operator to know instantly that this newsletter, this website, this flyer all came from the same organization they've learned to trust to deliver useful information and tools for success.

Since this project began there has been an explosion of interest in local foods and an expansion from a short summer market season to year-round markets almost statewide. This growth is desirable but, combined with the fact many NH small farms have at least one person working a weekday job, has made it increasingly challenging to find time slots convenient for our farmers to attend educational events. These sorts of challenges will continue to arise as the agricultural scene grows and changes in our state.

The final lessons we've learned are very practical. We have learned it takes a lot of time and energy to do workshop events and that we woefully underbudgeted for mileage in our project. The geography of our state (190 miles X 70 miles) combine with a lop-sided population base (suburban in the bottom third, rural and sparsely populated in the top third) to increase the number of miles organizers, speakers and participants need to travel to events.

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Project 4

Project Title: *Central New Hampshire Apple Marketing Cooperative*

Applicant: Southern New Hampshire resource Conservation & Development Area

Final Report

Project Summary

Several central New Hampshire apple growers saw the establishment of a marketing cooperative as an opportunity to grow more apples, expand, and become more profitable. The specific purposes of the grant funds were to provide technical assistance to Central NH apple orchards in establishing a marketing cooperative that will allow them to aggregate their apples for sale into institutional (schools, hospitals, etc.) and wholesale markets. This would be accomplished by providing technical assistance to create the necessary business and marketing planning for the marketing cooperative and assisting the farms in standardizing their produce and improving quality through participation in the Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) certification. The orchards worked with a team of experts such as agricultural cooperative expert Lynda Brushett, PhD of the Cooperative Development Institute and established the marketing cooperative. The team also assisted them with readying their operations for Federal certifications, such as the GAP Certification, as well as creating and implementing a marketing plan. All goals and objectives have been met, the marketing cooperative known as NH Growers Cooperative has started, is active, growing, and successful, and continued outreach to potential new cooperative members and institutional buyers is on-going.

The motivation for this project was that small and medium sized orchards were missing out on the “Buy Local” movement. Small and medium sized orchards could not sell in the quantity and consistency needed by institutions but some of these orchards did not sell all of their apples at their own farmstands or had sections of their orchard that were not utilized because the growers did not have buyers for those apples. This marketing cooperative fulfilled the needs of the small and medium growers by getting them entrance to those markets while not losing their own retail operations. It helped them diversify at the perfect time as institutions, such as grocery stores, schools, and universities, were looking for local produce but could only find the consistency available by large growers. Also, agricultural cooperatives are not prevalent in New Hampshire. This project helped other producers see another model that is available to them to increase their sales and diversify their businesses. It has been said that New Hampshire can produce only two items in quantities enough to feed its population: milk and apples. This project helped in ensuring that NH grown apples were available in NH stores, schools, universities, and more.

Project Approach

The specific purposes of the grant funds were to provide technical assistance to NH apple orchards in establishing a marketing cooperative that would allow them to aggregate their apples for sale into institutional (schools, hospitals, etc.) and wholesale markets. This would be accomplished by providing technical assistance to create the necessary business and marketing planning for the marketing cooperative and assisting the farms in standardizing their produce and improving quality through participation in the Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) certification. Activities that supported these goals was working with agricultural cooperative expert Lynda Brushett, PhD of the Cooperative Development Institute to establish the marketing cooperative as well as the marketing expertise of Focus Marketing in Concord, NH. Southern NH RC&D also worked with experts from and technical assistance in readying their operations for Federal certifications, such as the GAP Certification, required by some wholesale markets, e.g. Hannafords, Walmart, and Price Chopper, and standardization of their produce for aggregated sale.

The technical assistance readied the businesses to increase the quantity of apples produced, quality of apples produced, and profitability by including wholesale markets in their business model through membership in a marketing cooperative. The technical assistance allowed farms to enter part of a market that is currently inaccessible to them as small emerging agricultural businesses.

Several small to medium sized apple orchards committed to forming the apple cooperative. The following apple orchards include: Carter Hill Orchards in Concord, Duane Family Farm in Barnstead, and Gould Hill Orchards in Hopkinton. Other farms have not formally joined the cooperative but have sold apples to the cooperative for marketing and distribution.

This project was timely due to the increase in interest in buying locally produced food. Local institutions were making commitments to “buy local” but few individual farms were able to provide the quantity, quality, and consistency that they needed to make their commitments workable. Founding member Carter Hill Orchards had the “food hub” capacity to pack, store, and distribute the apples but needed the technical assistance to incorporate an agricultural cooperative, file with the state with the proper documents such as the Articles of Incorporation, have a solid business and marketing plan, have the participating farms GAP certified, and build the relationship with the markets. This grant was timely and helped these farms gain entrée into new markets.

This project did not build on previously funded Specialty Crop Block Grants.

Goals and Outcomes

The goals and outcomes achieved were as follows:

- A marketing cooperative with five members was established: Carter Hill Orchard, Gould Hill Orchard, Appleview Orchard, Duane Family Orchard, Lavalley Family Farm. The cooperative is in the process of interviewing more potential members and purchases apples from several other small family farms in NH.
- Each farm has experienced an increase in sales though that has been season dependent. The first year of the cooperative was a bad apple season due to a late frost affecting the apple blossoms/ pollination, though increased sales were seen then, too (@5%). The second year was a better year of sales, resulting in closer to 10% sales for members except for one farm that had more individual sales at his farm stand/ store that he could not sell much to the cooperative (Lavalley).
- Each of the members received a GAP Plan as well as potential members received plans.
- Buyers for the fledgling marketing cooperative exceeded ten. Current buyers include: three different Hannaford Supermarkets, local Associated Grocers stores, St. Paul’s School, the Concord School District, University of New Hampshire, Whole Foods, and more.

Beneficiaries

The beneficiaries of this project were specialty crop producers in New Hampshire and the consumers of these foods. Some of the specialty crop producers that have benefited include:

- Carter Hill Orchard, Concord, NH

- Gould Hill Orchard, Hopkinton, NH
- Appleview Orchard, Loudon, NH
- Duane Family Farm, Barnstead, NH
- Lavalley family Farm, Pembroke/ Allenstown/ Hooksett, NH
- Surowiec Family Farm, Sanbornton, NH
- Lavoie's Farm, Hollis, NH
- Devylder Farm, Wolfeboro, NH

Other beneficiaries included the buyers that had the opportunity to buy local produce in the quantity, quality, and consistency they required. Other beneficiaries are the small increase in employees to fit the needs of the operation.

The growers also benefited from the technical expertise of the partners in this project including Bill Lord of UNH Cooperative Extension and Lynda Brushett of the Cooperative Development Institute.

Lessons Learned

When we started this project, Lynda Brushett had stated that they had tried to get grant funding to start agricultural cooperatives in NH in the past but funders stated, "Cooperatives won't work in NH." This project showed that there was an interest and willingness to start agricultural cooperatives, specifically marketing cooperatives, which could be successful. This project served as a model for other potential cooperatives in NH.

In order for a cooperative to be successful, the infrastructure must be in place. This cooperative would not have been successful if a packing line, cold storage, and refrigerated box trucks were not available by members of the cooperative. For the most part, the infrastructure located at Carter Hill Orchard was utilized as well as their pool of seasonal labor. These components allowed for the aggregation and transportation of the product to the markets.

Good salespeople with a good sales plan who are dedicated to the project are needed in order to succeed. The salespeople in this project were Rick Duane of Duane Family Farm and Todd Larocque of Carter Hill Orchard. This sales team (who also did a considerable amount of the trucking) created and fostered the contacts with the local institutional buyers. They also ensured that each of the farms had enough produce to fulfill the needs of the institutions.

Farms still make more money selling retail at their own farmstands. The marketing cooperative only works on selling the extra apples that cannot be sold at the local farm stand/ farm store. Because of this, it will be difficult to fulfill all of the institutional buyers in years when production is low.

The marketing cooperative has to honor the contracts that individual members have with their own local institutions. Several members already had institutional contracts with their local schools and smaller local grocery stores. The marketing cooperative did not compete with these pre-existing contracts and would not have been successful if they had. Trust and cooperation is needed to make a local agricultural cooperative work.

There is growing interest in agricultural cooperatives and this project gave farmers in the area a solid example of how it can be done. Thank you.

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Additional Information

See Appendix

Project 5**Project Title: *Apple Map with Coupon Promotion***

Applicant: New Hampshire Fruit Growers Association (NHFGA)

Final Report (previously submitted)

Project Summary:

New Hampshire fruit growers offer not only quality fruit but great Agritainment opportunities to their customers. The purpose of this promotion was to create new customers for the New Hampshire apple and tree fruit growers. We intended to do that by exposing new customers to our farms by giving them a coupon worth a free half peck of apples, redeemable at any participating New Hampshire Fruit Grower's farm. We worked closely with NH Made and distributed our coupons at NH Made booths located at 3 Hannaford Super markets over the Labor Day weekend and again at a NH Made booth during the Deerfield fair this past early October. Also a couple of our fruit grower members distributed the coupons at farmers markets located in and around the city of Concord in early September. The New Hampshire Fruit Growers Association (NHFGA) believed that if we could give new customers a reason to visit our farm's once that they would return again and again for more great fruit and agritainment opportunities in the future.

Project Approach:

In early 2012 we began working closely with Sullivan Creative marketing firm of Concord NH. Together we designed the 2000 tri-fold apple map flyers of participating NH fruit growers with their farm's location and contact information. Attached to this flyer was the coupon for the free half peck of apples complete with the four questions which needed to be answered for the coupon to be valid. The four questions were: 1.) Is this your first time visiting a NH Apple Orchard? 2.) Do you intend to return? 3.) Did you buy something during your visit? And if so how much did you spend? 4.) What is your zip code? Also included on the flyer was information to direct customers to our organization's website www.nhfruitgrowers.org. We gave member farms the option of participating in this promotional activity. In the end 20 of our roughly 35 member growers participated. Having "Committed" participating members has made a huge positive impact on the logistics of collecting the redeemed coupons to determine the measurable outcomes of this activity.

During February of 2012 we began with NH Made, Inc. This organization agreed to work with us to help execute the activities within this grant. Our contact person with NH Made was Ann Vennard. We worked out the details for the two events where the apple maps with coupons were going to be distributed. Originally we were going to distribute the map/coupons over Labor Day weekend at the Hampton Beach Seashell Complex in Hampton NH. However due to changes in the NH Made's schedule that was no longer an option. We did however come up with what turned out to be a better option. Over the Labor Day weekend, NH Made distributed roughly 750 of these coupons at promotional displays located in the produce departments of three Hannaford supermarkets located in Dover, Concord, and Nashua NH. Additionally, NH Made distributed roughly 1000 coupons at the Deer Field Fair in early October where free apples were offered to entice potential customers to visit the NH Made booth. In an effort to get a more even distribution of coupons and expose them to different circles of people, at the last minute, we diverted roughly 250 of the coupons to two NHFGA member farms to distribute at their respective farmers' markets booths in the Concord area. (See sample flyer attached in Appendix Project 5)

We did have one problem in implementing the project. The promotion was always intended for the 2012 harvest. However due to unforeseen weather events the 2012 apple crop was significantly reduced. We decided that the 2012 apple crop did not need this additional promotional activity. Our thoughts were to keep this promotion for a "Heavy" year when the crop was larger than could be sold and an activity like this one would pay the largest dividends possible. It turned out the 2013 apple crop offered that opportunity and in hindsight was the proper season to implement this promotion.

Goals and Outcomes:

Our goals for this project were simply to expose new customers to the fruit and agritainment opportunities that our local farms here in New Hampshire have to offer. We wanted to increase the "visits" to our member farms. Our original goal of a 25% redemption rate was not realized. We actually had 197 of the original 2000 coupons redeemed at participating farms throughout the state. This turns out to be a bit less than a 10% redemption rate. It is possible that not all of the redeemed coupons were in fact returned to us for counting. However, we estimate the number of unreturned coupons to be under 40. Which if that is the case our redemption rate would have been only 11.8%, still well below our goal of 25%.

15% of the customers who used the coupons were first timers to visiting a NH apple orchard. We had hoped that 50% of them would be first timers. All of them including every customer who was not a first time visitor said they would return. A very small percentage did not buy anything during their visit and the range of money spent by these customers was from 0\$-\$200 with most spending in the \$15-\$25 range.

In the end we exposed 30 new customers to NH apple orchards. If they all return two times per season over the next three years and spend an average of \$20 per visit, this will generate \$3600 in new revenue from new customers over the next three years because of this promotion. This grant cost the American tax payers \$3130. Although we did not meet our goals there will be new revenues created by this promotional effort that will in time pay them back.

One other very positive outcome from the 2013 harvest season which could be a result of this promotion is our website “visits” at www.nhfruitgrowers.org increased 52% over the previous year’s number of visits. Typically our yearly growth in visits is in the 25-30% range. Maybe getting these coupons out there promoted our organization enough to encourage more than the usual amount of customers to visit our website.

Beneficiaries:

The 20 participating members of the New Hampshire fruit Growers Association were the most to benefit from this promotion because those were the farms listed on the map. The balance of our non-participating members will benefit as well through increased exposure of our group’s website. We hope the NH Made organization got some increased recognition and exposure in partnering with us. The free apples and attractive display at the Deerfield fair I’m sure resulted in increased exposure for that organization.

Lessons Learned:

We were surprised that we realized, at best, a 12% redemption rate. We thought our distribution locations were sound, targeting produce customers at both local grocery stores and farmers markets within our state. Also the type of person which visits the Deerfield fair is more often than not the outdoorsy type which would be inclined to go apple picking during the fall. Maybe a 12% redemption rate was a good one, and our goals were just too lofty.

A 15% rate of redeemed coupons being by first time customers tells us a couple things. Apple picking is a New Hampshire pastime and it is difficult to find people who do not go apple picking in the fall. Again, the type of people we were targeting at the locations we were distributing the coupons reinforces that those consumers who go to fairs, farmers markets, and grocery store produce departments are likely those that go apple picking.

It would be interesting to do this same promotion again with different points of distribution for the coupons to try and target a different clientele. Places like auto parts and antique stores, the beach during Labor Day weekend, or maybe working with a large employer in the area to distribute to employees. Getting these coupons into the hands of the people who frequent and work at these businesses and places might expose the fruit growers of New Hampshire to a more diverse cross section of people, some of whom may not already be in the habit of apple picking every fall like the group of people we targeted in this promotion. Even if fewer coupons were redeemed we believe we would get a higher percentage of those by first time customers, thus resulting in a more successful promotion because more new customers would be exposed to the great fruit and agritainment opportunities offered by the fruit growing farms of New Hampshire.

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Project 6

Project Title: *2013 NHPGA and NHLA Joint Winter Meeting Keynote Speaker*

Applicant: NH Plant Growers Association (NHPGA)

Final Report (previously submitted)

Project Summary

The purpose of the request for funding a keynote speaker at the Winter Meeting was to address three main issues. First, both the NHPGA (New Hampshire Plant Growers Association) and NHLA (New Hampshire Landscape Association) strive to offer quality educational programs to their members. Secondly, including a well known speaker is likely to attract more attendees to the program and perhaps increase membership in the Associations.

Finally, the economic climate in recent years has greatly impacted many individuals and businesses who are members of these Associations. As with many organizations, it has been difficult to maintain membership numbers. Receiving grant money to sponsor a quality speaker allowed the Associations to provide an outstanding program without a significant cost increase.

Project Approach

The Winter Meeting Committee met numerous times during 2012 to prepare for the meeting which was held on January 16, 2013. The committee was chaired by Cathy Neal from UNH Cooperative Extension and included members of NHPGA, NHLA, and UNH Cooperative Extension. The keynote speaker, Delilah Onofrey, was confirmed as planned in April 2012. She is the Director of Flower Power Marketing for the Suntory Collection and a former editor of *Greenhouse Grower Magazine*.

The speakers for additional concurrent sessions were also finalized during the summer and confirmed early in the fall of 2012. The program and agenda was created in October and a flyer was circulated among committee members before final approval. Newsletters and press releases were sent out beginning in early November. Postings were created on the Associations' websites and contacts were made through e-mail updates. Potential vendors were sent packets with program and registration materials in early November

Arrangements were made with the venue where the meeting was held and updates were provided as the numbers of registered attendees was compiled. Plans were put in place for members of both organizations to assist on the day of the meeting with registration and vendor setup.

Goals and Outcomes Achieved

One quantitative goal of the project was to increase attendance at the Winter Meeting. It would benefit members of the Associations and also increase revenue for NHPGA and NHLA. There were 140 attendees and 23 vendors at the 2011 Winter Meeting. The goal was to increase attendance by 25% and also increase revenue for the organizations involved. The number of registered attendees was 151 and vendors 22 in 2013. This was about a 6% increase but was impacted by poor travel weather. There likely would have been more participants if there had not been snowy conditions.

There was a net income of \$1822.61 which was divided between the organizations and this was an increase over previous years due in part in assistance from the grant. There were also positive comments received on the surveys that were distributed to attendees. Those survey results were reviewed at a February 2013 committee meeting where overall results were discussed and plans were begun for the 2014 Winter Meeting. There were several attendees who expressed interest in becoming more involved in NHPGA. As a result of making those contacts, there are new volunteers and board members. This illustrates the impact that the meeting had in terms of strengthening the organizations.

There also was a significant increase in donations to the Horticulture Endowment Fund (which is an arm of NHPGA) this year. This may have been in part due to an announcement made at the Winter Meeting regarding the history of the program and the research it has supported.

Beneficiaries

The beneficiaries of this project include over 300 individuals and businesses that comprise the memberships of NHPGA and NHLA. The attendees of the Winter Meeting benefited from gaining knowledge on several topics as well as having an opportunity to network with other members of the horticulture industry. But on a broader scope, the horticulture industry in New Hampshire benefited in many ways.

The income generated by the meeting has a direct impact on the programs that the organizations support. Membership increases are likely to occur from sponsoring quality meetings, and that has a long term effect on the organizations and their impact in the future. Outreach including student scholarships, informational publications, sponsorship of workshops, website updates, and twilight meetings are all dependent on funding from the Associations.

Lessons Learned

The importance of having a timeline to accomplish planning and execution of a project such as this was apparent. Cathy Neal was an excellent organizer and made sure that tasks were completed in a timely manner. This insured that the meeting was well publicized and that everything was in place well in advance of the event. Committee members were given specific tasks and were held accountable.

The topics chosen for the keynote speaker as well as the concurrent sessions were based on survey results from the previous year. There was an interest in more marketing and business-related information as opposed to strictly plant or growing topics. This was likely due to the economic pressure that businesses were experiencing. Addressing the topics suggested by members of the organizations undoubtedly increased attendance.

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Project 7

Multi-State Project

Project Title: *Building a Fresh-Sliced Apple Market through Food Service*

Applicant: New England Apple Association

Final Report (previously submitted)

Project Summary

The purpose of the project “Building a Fresh-Sliced Apple Market Through Food Service” was to explore ways to develop a viable, year-round food service market for fresh-sliced apples, and to identify, reduce, or eliminate barriers to such a program.

The project was important and timely because the popularity of fresh-sliced apples is increasing rapidly, and is expected to continue to do so. New England apple growers, already at a competitive disadvantage with other apple-growing regions and states, risk falling further behind by failing to take advantage of this lucrative new market.

This Specialty Crop project built upon a 2009 Federal-State Marketing Improvement Program (FSMIP) grant administered by the New Hampshire Department of Agriculture, Markets and Food. Stephen Lacasse, then-chair of the board of directors of the New England Apple Association, directed the 2009 project, “Packaging Fresh Produce for the Snack Food Market.” As part of that study, Champlain Valley Specialty (CVS) in Keeseville, New York, developed a New England apple slice bag and brand. Apples were purchased from New England growers, fresh-sliced and packaged in four-ounce bags, and sold to public school systems in Connecticut, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New York, Rhode Island, and Vermont, through the Department of Defense. The fresh-sliced apples were popular with children, but logistical problems and low returns to growers (\$13 to \$14 per 42-pound box) kept the program from growing after the FSMIP grant ran out. But the popularity of fresh-sliced apples with consumers (especially children) continues to grow; they are now on the menus of most fast-food chains, for example, including McDonald’s, which in 2011 began to include fresh-sliced apples in their popular “Happy Meals” for children.

A profitable fresh-sliced apple program in the private sector could help growers subsidize fresh-sliced apples in the public schools, adding a healthy choice for children’s meals and reaching out to the next generation of consumers. While the return to the grower was too low in the 2009 project, fresh-sliced apples have proven to be an effective way for children to eat more fruit.

The Specialty Crop grant project tested these assumptions about New England’s capacity to tap into this potentially lucrative business:

- 1) New England’s orchards individually are too small to supply the volume needed by large food service customers;
- 2) The infrastructure to transport and process fresh-sliced apples is lacking; and
- 3) The apple industry lacks funds for a marketing campaign to attract new business.

The New England apple industry has experienced a slow but steady contraction over the past 15 years. Average annual production dropped from more than 5 million 42-pound boxes in 2000 to about 4 million boxes in 2009 (the past three years have been even smaller, the result of weather-related losses). Meanwhile, apple production has flourished around the world and in other parts of the United States in places that have more available and affordable arable land.

But some of the slide is the result of the New England apple industry's lack of funds to invest in long-term strategies to stabilize the industry and eventually lead to renewed growth. The export market for American apples is growing, for example, but growers in states like Pennsylvania and Virginia have been able to access new markets in Central America only after years of work to resolve a host of marketing and technical challenges.

The fresh-slice project was intended to add new food service customers in Massachusetts and New Hampshire through targeted marketing and by strengthening the network of growers, processors, and distributors required to supply them. Due to a variety of factors, the development of a viable fresh-slice program in New England will require additional time and resources

Project Approach

As prerequisites to recruiting new food service customers, the project began by 1) publicizing the program to New England's apple growers, and evaluating their capacity and interest; 2) assessing the region's infrastructure needs; and 3) working out logistics between grower, processor, and customers.

To meet these objectives, project director Russell Powell visited nearly 50 of the region's orchards during the grant period:

Connecticut (5): Belltown Orchards, South Glastonbury; Blue Hills Orchard, Wallingford; Bussa Orchards, South Glastonbury; Lyman Orchards, Middlefield; Rogers Orchards, Southington.

Maine (7): Cooper Farms, West Paris; Greenwood Orchards, Turner; McDougal Orchards, Springvale; Pietree Orchard, Sweden; Randall Orchards, Standish; Ricker Hill Orchards, Turner; Romac Orchards, Sanford.

Massachusetts (18): Atkins Farm, Amherst; Bolton Orchards, Bolton; Carlson Orchards, Harvard; Carver Hill Orchard; Clarkdale Fruit Farms, Deerfield; UMass Cold Spring Orchard, Belchertown; Dowse Orchards, Sherborn; Honey Pot Hill Orchards, Stow; Lanni Orchards, Lunenburg; Meadowbrook Orchards, Sterling; Nashoba Valley Winery, Bolton; Nestrovich Fruit Farm, Granville; Pine Hill Orchards, Colrain; Red Apple Farm, Phillipston; Quonquont Farm, Whately; Sholan Farm, Leominster; Tougas Family Farm, Northborough; Westward Orchards, Harvard.

New Hampshire (8): Alyson's Orchard, Walpole; Apple Hill Farm, Concord; Brookdale Fruit Farm, Hollis; Butternut Farm, Farmington; Carter Hill Orchard, Concord; Gould

Hill Orchards, Contoocook; Hackleboro Orchards, Canterbury; Poverty Lane Orchards, Lebanon.

Vermont (7): Chapin's Orchards, Essex Junction; Champlain Orchard, Shoreham; Douglas Orchard, West Shoreham; Green Mountain Orchards, Putney; Hackett's Orchards, South Hero; Sunrise Orchards, Cornwall; Wellwood Orchards, Springfield.

In addition, Powell attended these meetings to meet with growers and solicit their feedback:

Rhode Island Fruit Growers, March 29, 2012

Connecticut Fruit Growers, Rogers Orchards, June 19, 2012

Massachusetts Fruit Growers, UMass Cold Spring Orchard, July 10, 2012

Maine State Pomological Society, Pietree Orchard, July 19, 2012

Powell met with a number of individuals and businesses impacting the project:

Ken Ayars, Rhode Island, chief, division of agriculture, who is interested in developing new food service opportunities for growers in his state.

Annie Cheatham, president of the New England Farmers Union, to discuss NEFU's role in a feasibility study for a fresh-slicing facility in the region.

Jeremy Dygert, president of Champlain Valley Specialty (CVS) in Keesville, New York, the fresh-slicing firm that would handle new business for the foreseeable future.

Deishin Lee, a professor at Harvard Business School, and writer Jim Weber, to develop "New England Apple Slices," a case study that looks at the fresh-sliced apple supply and delivery chain

Ned O'Neill, vice president of J. P. Sullivan Apple Agents in Ayer, Massachusetts, New England's largest packer of fresh apples

Sabrina Pashtan, sustainability coordinator, Boston University Dining Services

Stacey Purslow, New Hampshire Farm to School coordinator

Professor Lee and Weber accompanied Powell to CVS in October 2011, and interviewed growers independently. Lee donated her time to the project to research and write the case study.

Dygert met with growers at the December 13, 2011, annual meeting of the New England Apple Association in Manchester, New Hampshire.

Powell further publicized the project with “The Future of Fresh Slices,” the cover article in the winter 2012 edition of *McIntosh News*, the quarterly newsletter of the New England Apple Association. The story and photographs resulted from Powell’s October 2011 visit to CVS’s Keeseville, New York, processing plant.

As a result of these efforts and outreach, New England growers and Champlain Valley Specialty now have a better understanding of the potential of fresh-sliced apples and how they need to work together to realize it.

CVS has developed an effective system for sourcing its apples and supplying its customers. The company picks up apples directly from the orchard, brings them back to its facility to be cleaned, sorted, sliced, and packaged, and then delivers the finished product to its customers within 24 hours. This relieves growers of the burdens of finding customers, pre-sorting apples, and delivering them to the processor, and enables CVS to supply its customers with fresh products.

With a distribution system in place and strong support for a pilot food service program among New England’s commissioners of agriculture in Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and Rhode Island, the way has been paved for a viable fresh-sliced program for the region’s apple growers. Add to this encouraging signs from the marketplace, specifically Boston University, with more than 30,000 students, and there is reason for optimism about the fresh-sliced food service market.

But the program is on hold until there is a crop size large enough for growers to test the fresh-sliced waters. Additionally, the feedback from growers is that they still need convincing that the financial return will be great enough to supply this new market, and eventually invest in new plantings to meet increased demand. CVS’s ability to eliminate pre-sorting enables them to offer growers higher prices for bins of orchard-run apples than if growers had to presort themselves, eliminating one barrier. But prices for whole fresh apples have been relatively high and stable in recent years, and these premium apples would be mixed in with lesser grades in the unsorted bins. Growers expressed skepticism that the increased return for fresh-sliced apples would be enough to offset this loss. In addition to a rebound in supply, CVS will need additional meetings with growers to convince them.

But the quality of CVS is high, they have excess capacity, and they are relatively close to the region’s growers. More than that, they are willing to reduce the burden on New England’s distribution infrastructure by picking up apples directly from participating orchards and delivering finished product to customers. Unless and until fresh-sliced apples become a significant revenue source for New England’s apple growers, it makes greater economic sense to contract with CVS than to build a new processing facility in the region, especially since a new facility would need to be supported by a reliable transportation system for picking up and delivering the apples, further increasing the cost.

If the market for fresh-sliced apples takes off, New England will likely need a feasibility study for a processing facility to evaluate its potential.

The main components of a successful fresh-sliced apples program are 1) customers; 2) supply; 3) transportation; and 4) processing. This project affirmed the potential for customers, and a reliable

and efficient means of distributing and processing apples. Remaining barriers are crop size and convincing growers of the program's financial potential.

Goals and Outcomes Achieved

While a system for a viable food-service market is now in place as a result of the project, the stated goal of establishing at least four new food service venues — roughly one per season to create an aggregate year-round market, supplied by multiple growers, in New Hampshire and the heavily populated areas of nearby eastern Massachusetts, with a price threshold of \$15 per box — was not achieved.

As a result of project director Powell's meetings with Jeremy Dygert of CVS, the region's growers, and key players (such as Harvard University's Deishin Lee, Rhode Island Chief of Agriculture Ken Ayars, and Boston University Sustainability Coordinator Sabrina Pashtan), groundwork has been laid for a successful fresh-sliced apple program for New England, with the necessary infrastructure to support it.

But the small crop sizes combined with growers' continued skepticism about the financial return on fresh-sliced apples made several of the goals of the project moot or unfulfilled.

The 2010, 2011, and 2012 seasons all produced smaller-than-normal apple crops in New England, meaning that there were too few surplus apples available to commit to a new market. A normal or above-normal yield will be needed for growers to enter the fresh-sliced business.

Growers also remain unconvinced that selling their fruit for fresh-slices can provide a higher return than selling their fresh apples whole. The pricing system for CVS to purchase apples from growers for fresh slicing is different from the traditional wholesale or processing markets, making it difficult for growers to compare the financial return from fresh-slices. The lower supply of fresh apples and higher demand during the project years have resulted in improved prices for growers, further reducing their incentive for investing in a new and unproven fresh-sliced market (growers are getting \$20 to \$25 per box for many varieties of fresh whole apples, with some, like Honeycrisp or Gala, returning even higher prices, compared to the \$15 per box targeted in the project's measurable outcomes).

Evaluating the financial return to growers is further complicated by CVS's operating methods. Having CVS take "orchard-run" apples in bins rather than sorted boxes solves one problem for growers but creates another. By purchasing bins directly from the orchard, CVS eliminates the costly step for growers of pre-sorting the apples, and enables CVS to use some fruit that would not make it out of the packinghouse, since the fresh-slice process can use apples with minor defects that would not be acceptable as whole apples. But the bins would include apples that could command premium prices if sold whole. Growers expressed doubt that CVS's price for the bins, while higher than the processed market, would compensate for the loss of the whole apples. Growers must be convinced that they will see a net financial gain before agreeing to CVS's terms.

While CVS president Jeremy Dygert expressed confidence that growers could realize the \$15 per box target, the accounting methods need to be fine-tuned so that growers can make a direct cost

comparison, since the \$15 per box figure refers to whole, pre-sorted apples for the fresh market. CVS would take (and sort) apples of all grades, and CVS's payments to growers would thus blend whole fresh apple prices and less lucrative processing rates. Since the quantities of high-quality apples from the orchard-run bins would vary from bin to bin and season to season, it would be difficult to estimate their value. To attract the New England growers, CVS must develop a way to measure the relative quantities and qualities of the apples they receive, and either pay market prices for the high quality apples or return them to growers.

A third barrier after crop size and evaluating profitability is the varietal mix preferred by CVS, chiefly Empire apples. Currently there are not enough Empires in New England to support a major fresh-slice initiative. Other, less desirable varieties would have to be used in addition, such as McIntosh, which CVS has found to be less popular with children than the sweeter Empire, Idared, or Gala. To enter the fresh-slice market in a significant way, growers will need to plant more trees of the desired varieties.

One way to begin a fresh-slice program and give growers time to evaluate its success and invest in new plantings is to introduce the New England brand incrementally. CVS desires the stability of a year-round contract with their food-service clients, which New England's growers currently are not in a position to supply. One solution is to launch a new program with a promotion like "New England Apple Month," for example, when all of the fresh-sliced apples came from the region's orchards, while the rest of the year CVS would supply the client by sourcing apples from New York state or elsewhere. This would give New England's growers time to invest in new trees with the fresh-slice market in mind.

Given the small 2012 crop not just in New England but in neighboring New York as well — New York state apples normally could supplement a fresh-sliced program in New England, giving New England's growers time to build capacity — there is no purpose in pursuing fresh-slice customers at this time. (New York state lost nearly half its crop in 2012 due to the same frost damage that impacted New England and Michigan, which suffered historic losses.)

Looking ahead to 2013 and beyond to whenever the crop is of sufficient size and growers become convinced of the financial rewards, the parts are now in place to launch a successful fresh-sliced program: 1) a high-quality processor close enough to the region, meaning that New England does not have to build a processing plant to enter the fresh-sliced market; 2) a reliable way to get fruit quickly from grower to processor to market; and 3) potential customers.

Beneficiaries

All of New England's several hundred apple growers were beneficiaries of this project by becoming more aware of the opportunities and challenges of growing for the fresh-sliced market, and by the development of a reliable infrastructure and a viable marketing plan for private food-service clients, when growers are ready to enter this market. CVS will become a beneficiary when a fresh-sliced program is launched.

The growers that stand to benefit the most when the fresh-slice market develops are those that already are large enough (approximately 50 acres or more) to supply the program initially, and those plus smaller orchards willing to invest in new plantings.

The economic impact of fresh-sliced apples remains to be determined, but the category continues to grow nationally as evidenced by the presence of fresh-sliced apples on the menus of all of the major fast-food chains. While current statistics for fresh-slice apple volume are not readily available, “Trends in the Marketing of Fresh Produce and Fresh-cut Products,” a 2008 report by Dr. Roberta Cook of the Department of Agriculture and Resource Economics at the University of California Davis, shows that fresh-cut produce sales increased from \$3.3 billion in 1994 to \$15.5 billion in 2007 — four years before McDonald’s added fresh-sliced apples to its popular Happy Meals for children.

According to the USDA’s National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS), New England’s apple industry occupied 14,200 acres in 2010 and had a value for utilized production of more than \$62 million. A thriving food service business in fresh-sliced apples could provide \$6 million to \$10 million in additional farm income for the six-state region once supplies increase and grower reluctance decreases.

Lessons Learned

A food service market for fresh-sliced apples in New England exists and is expected to grow, but the region’s growers are not yet in a position to capitalize on it.

Until supplies increase, growers are unlikely to divert fruit to the fresh-slice market, as the price point for whole apples is high and there are no surplus apples to supply a new use. Even the juice market — which traditionally brings the lowest return to growers — has been substantially higher than normal in 2012 due to limited supplies.

The project sought to create an incentive for growers by attracting customers first. In hindsight, this was not an effective strategy, since there were not enough apples during the project years to supply the new market. Going forward, it will be essential to quantify the available supply before soliciting new customers.

Having said that, it is clear from discussions with Boston University and key facilitators like Agriculture Chief Kenneth Ayars in Rhode Island that potential for fresh-slice apples in New England remains high, both because of the intrinsic appeal of the product and the burgeoning “buy local” trend that has its roots in New England.

Other than price, the logistical barriers to a fresh-slice program were addressed satisfactorily by the project. There is now a reliable, high-quality facility willing to process the apples, and delivery systems from orchard to processor to customer that account for the relatively small size and rural geography of New England’s orchards. Even small orchards could participate in a fresh-slice program, since CVS picks up fruit at the orchard and eliminates the costly step of pre-sorting.

More discussion and experience is needed to determine the best varietal mix for fresh-sliced apples. Empires are currently favored by CVS due to their abundant supply in New York state, their suitability for fresh-slicing, their storage ability, and their flavor, which is more sweet than tart. But CVS uses other varieties throughout the year, and New England consumers might be

receptive to an apple with more tartness than Empire, particularly McIntosh, which accounts for about two-thirds of the New England crop. If “Macs” are found to be suitable, growers will not need to invest heavily in new trees, but if other, sweeter apples are preferred, it will increase the start-up costs of growers selling to this market.

Further analysis is needed to make meaningful price comparisons between orchard-run bins purchased by CVS for fresh-slicing and the relative return from the multiple uses and pricing structures of apples sorted by the orchard (whole for fresh eating, process, and juice).

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Project 8

Project Title: *Continuation of the Buy Local Agriculture Campaign partnership with NH Division of Travel & Tourism Development*

Applicant: NH Dept. of Agriculture, Markets & Food

Project Title: Continuation of the Buy Local Agriculture Campaign partnership with NH Division of Travel & Tourism Development

Final Report (previously submitted)

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 2011 Special Crop Block Grant Program in October 2011 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.

The focus of the entire advertising campaign is estimated at 80-85% specialty crops and 15-20% other non-specialty crop commodities. The visual focus of the television and related internet advertising is primarily specialty crops available through farm stands, pick your own and farmers' markets. To cover the non-specialty crop inclusion in the campaign (cheese in Wine & Cheese brochure and other non-specialty crop commodities that benefit in general from the Buy Local Agriculture theme), the NH Dept. of Agriculture, Markets & Food and the Division of Travel & Tourism Development together contributed cash and in-kind spending at a level of about 37% of the total spending, which more than covers the non-specialty crop commodities.

Advertising was targeted to buying decision makers; those who made the decisions about household purchases regarding food and other home products (plants, Christmas Trees, etc.). Choices about placement of advertising (networks, specific programming, timeframes, etc.) were made based on viewer/user demographic information provided by the media and our advertising partners.

Project Approach

Activities performed since February 2013 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 which was originally this image:



Part of the activities conducted this year, included an update to the logo to give it a fresher, more modern and diverse look. The re-design was accomplished by September 2013 and the logo will appear in all advertising moving forward (only 50% of the redesign cost came from SCBG funds):



Goals and Outcomes Achieved:

The overall goal of the **Continuation of the Buy Local Agriculture Campaign** partnership with NH Division of Travel & Tourism Development is to continue to build awareness of NH agriculture and agricultural products and to increase sales of these products.

This was accomplished with targeted television and internet advertising and brochure development and distribution.

Television advertising was placed on New Hampshire station, WMUR-TV from August – October, 2013 and for the same timeframe on selected Comcast stations. Companion ads also appeared on the networks' websites. The ads drove visitors to the www.agriculture.nh.gov website (see attached ad examples in Appendix Project 8 file).

Additional internet advertising was conducted on Face Book. The ads featured a timely event or seasonal product and encouraged viewers to “like” the NHDAMF Face Book page. We also hosted an agricultural photo contest on Face Book from September-December 2013 which encouraged visits to our Face Book page and interaction such as submission of photos and voting for the favorite photo. (the photo contest was paid for with non-Specialty Crop Block Grant funds). Face Book follower numbers increased from 9580- 16,000 January- December 2013.

Measurable Outcomes Achieved:

- **10 percent increase in NHDAMF website visits as a result of the consumer campaign which will drive consumers to specific website(s) for information (baseline of 60,000 per year at time of application).** Our website visits have remained fairly constant. From January-December 2012 the website showed 200,420 page views. From January- mid-December 2013 there were 197,896 page views. We can now also measure unique visitors and from January –December 2013 we had 63,353 for the year. Measured via AWStats (changed from Web Trends).
- **Establishment of 2 additional farmers' markets (currently 80 markets).** During the 2013 summer market season there were 71 markets that officially signed on to our market directory. We know there were at least eight additional markets that never submitted a registration form to the NH Dept. of Agriculture, Markets & Food. Summer market numbers have remained somewhat static during the last couple of years. It is not unusual for market coordinators, who are often market vendors who volunteer to oversee market

organization, to change from one year to the next and new contact information is not passed on to us, making it difficult to track down market activity.

The winter markets continue to be the venue that is growing and exciting consumers. There were 31 “winter” markets operating around the state from November to May, 2012-2013, an increase of 10% from 2011-12. There are 27 winter markets signed on to our directory so far this season (2013-14) and we expect the list to grow as markets finalize their plans. The winter markets are very popular with shoppers and we continue to encourage their operation establishment and promote them in an online directory of winter markets. (See appendices).

- **10 percent increase in farm listings on the NH Virtual Farmers’ Market website (90 farms listed at time of application).** There are currently 145 farmers listed on the NH Virtual Farms’ Market website, a 38% increase since this project began. The software for this site is dated and discussions have begun regarding updating the site to improve function and navigation. The scope of this update project is outside of the activities conducted with the SCBG funding
- **10 percent increase in buyer visits to the NH Virtual Farmers Marketplace website (49,000 visits From October 2008- August 2009)**The visits to the NH Virtual Farmers Market website from March 2012 through December of 2012 were 79,434. From March 2012 through February 2013, visits totaled 94,029. The site is inactive while a renovation is planned.
- **New publications will be distributed to 20,000 consumers.** The “Experience Rural New Hampshire” brochure was reprinted for 2013. This is a listing of farm and rural events and activities, featuring gardens, fairs, seasonal festivals, etc. About 50% of the brochure is specialty crop related and covered by the grant funds. The rest is covered by partner match. 20,000 brochures were printed and all were distributed by September of 2013.

See attached examples of brochures and advertising (Appendix Project 8 file)

Beneficiaries:

The continuation of this effort will result in greater demand and increased sales of products at all venues, creating a positive environment for business development and expansion and generating a positive economic impact.

Consumers will benefit from new understanding of local agriculture and local products and the industry’s impact on New Hampshire, socially, physically and economically. Consumers will benefit from the ability to identify local products to help them make choices and purchases. Dollars spent locally, circulate in the local economy, benefiting the local community as a whole.

People/operations impacted:

- 78 farmers markets with approximately 500 total vendors (NH Farmers’ Market Association and NH Dept. of Agriculture, Markets & Food, 2012)

- 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 2012)
- 181 Christmas Tree growers (US Census of Agriculture, 2007)
- 28 NH wineries (NH Winery Association, 2012)

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 continues to be successful 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 through the establishment of 31 winter farmers' markets in 2012-13. These markets are very popular and draw large crowds of shoppers on a regular basis.

We 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 interest in New Hampshire food and agriculture is certainly displayed via Face Book and other internet venues. Our ads have a high "click-through" rate, where viewers actually click on the ad to see more information about New Hampshire Agriculture. This further reinforces that our efforts are well-placed and effective. Face Book advertising has become an important additional component to the marketing campaign. Likes/followers numbers have increased greatly since the advertising effort began in September 2011 with approximately 1200 followers to over 16,000 today. We are also using Twitter in the communications mix and post to both Face Book and Twitter in tandem, to reach selected audiences. Twitter follower numbers have also increased. Social media will continue to be 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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