

# New Jersey Department of Agriculture Specialty Crop Block Grant Program (SCBG)

## SCBG Agreement # 12-25-B-1243

### Final Performance Report

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**SCBG Agreement # 12-25-B-1243**

Final Performance Report  
December 29, 2014

**New Jersey Department of Agriculture**

**Project Title:**

“Project designed to maximize the effectiveness of the Jersey Fresh product branding and advertising programs.”

**Project Summary**

New Jersey’s high population density, and other economic factors, makes it difficult for our growers to always be the lowest cost producer of specialty crops. Due to the prevailing commodity based pricing structure for most commercial packs of specialty crops New Jersey growers are therefore at a disadvantage

One of the most important ways to add value to specialty crops is to continue to promote them as locally produced. Through the Specialty Crop Block Grant Program (SCBG) our agency seeks to improve the promotion, and market value, of locally grown specialty crops through an expansion of the *Jersey Fresh* advertising and promotion program through increased advertising, branding at the point of sale and the involvement of non-profit specialty crop growers organizations. The purpose of these projects is to maximize the effectiveness of the *Jersey Fresh* product branding and advertising program.

The following statistics illustrate the steady decline in all farms including specialty crop producing operations;

Year	# of NJ Farms	Land in NJ Farms (acres)	Average size of NJ Farms in acres
1957	19,000	1,560,000	82
2010	10,300	730,000	71
2011	10,300	730,000	71
2013	9,100	720,000	79

USDA, National Agricultural Statistics Service. Quick Stats Data as of 12/29/2014.

In the past 57 years New Jersey has lost half of its farmland. It is important for the NJDA to work to add value to specialty crops to improve the economic viability of New Jersey specialty crop producers. The SCBG funds assisted in this effort.

For the past thirty years the Jersey Fresh program has promoted a consistent brand image of New Jersey’s fruit and vegetable crops as fresh, nutritious, high quality and locally grown.

The most effective methods of promoting, and maintaining this consistent consumer and industry recognition of the brand, has been through the use of television, print, outdoor and point of purchase advertising. This project built upon past projects funded by both the State of New Jersey, individual grower organizations and the Specialty Crop Block Grant program.

Because the process of marketing and brand identification is continual it is important to always promote a consistent brand image. Product branding ensures potential customers that they will have a consistent experience whenever they purchase a branded product. Another part of the branding experience for consumers is the creation and maintenance of a certain brand identify which communicates a level of quality and consistency, its' market position relative to other products and a type of product personality.

The continuation of similar advertising and promotional efforts to build brand identity is necessary to maintain consistent brand identification.

### **Project Approach**

For the past thirty years the *Jersey Fresh* program has promoted a consistent brand image of New Jersey's fruit and vegetable crops as fresh, nutritious, high quality and locally grown. The most effective methods of promoting, and maintaining consumer and industry recognition of the brand, has been through the use of television, radio and print media combined with point of purchase advertising.

The Specialty Crop Block Grant – Farm Bill funds were used to supplement the existing *Jersey Fresh* promotional program for locally grown fruits and vegetables. The funds were used to purchase of media buys for existing *Jersey Fresh* print, radio and television advertisements. Working in close coordination with Princeton Partners, the contracted advertising agency for the *Jersey Fresh* program advertising media buys were made in order to continue to support and enhance consumer awareness of the *Jersey Fresh* brand. Using the easily recognizable *Jersey Fresh* brand name the ads were designed to promote the availability and quality of locally grown fruits and vegetables directly to consumers at the peak our growing season.

### **Trade Print Advertising**

#### **Print**

A quarter-page four-color print ads creating a total of 420,000 media impressions with the readers of Edible Jersey targeting food and gourmet conscious residents of New Jersey was placed.

#### **Produce Industry Print Advertisements**

A total of 15 half to full page ads creating a total of 579,736 media impressions among readers of the Produce News, Produce Business, The Packer, The Packer Online and the Food Trade News, all publications that effectively target the produce industry.

#### **Radio**

Jersey Fresh radio advertisements were played on different radio stations throughout New Jersey/New York/Philadelphia metro market. Many of these spots aired on stations along the Jersey shore, a major destination area for both tourists and residents of the state.

### Television

Jersey Fresh television ads were shown on broadcast networks covering the Northern New Jersey and New York City area and the Philadelphia and Southern New Jersey areas in an attempt to reach more people in our primary and secondary target markets. Local news, local programming and national shows were selected to reach large audiences such as *Good Morning America* and *The Today Show*.

### NJDA Jersey Fresh Project Staff:

Al Murray, Assistant Secretary of Agriculture, the administrator of the Jersey Fresh program provided oversight for project development and approved the budget, projects and creative themes.

Joe Atchison, Market Development Representative, is provided Jersey Fresh product development and procurement services. Mr. Atchison also worked as the primary department liaison to CMD Partners which, in accordance with the State of New Jersey Department of Treasury guidelines, was the designated advertising services provider to the Jersey Fresh program

William Walker, Agricultural Marketing Specialist, provided professional marketing support and assisted in point of purchase advertising materials distribution. Mr. Walker also hired and supervised two college interns who assisted in the mailing of point of advertising materials and also made direct to store deliveries of Jersey fresh point of sale advertising materials.

Logan Brown, Economic Development Representative, assisted with the implementation of promotional and advertising projects related to the Jersey Fresh promotional program. Mr. Brown also served as the Jersey Fresh projects reporting and compliance officer for the utilization of Specialty Crop Block Grant funds utilized for the Jersey fresh program.

Lynn Coffin, administrative assistant, facilitated payments and worked to track expenses related to the utilization of Specialty Crop Block Grant funds utilized for the Jersey fresh program.

### Advertising Agency Services

#### Princeton Partners, Inc.

Jeff Cheseaman

President

Princeton Forrestal Village

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Tel; 609 452-8500

### **Goals and Outcomes Achieved**

The goals of this project were achieved through the completion of the planned television, print and radio advertising efforts.

This project funded 920 Radio advertisements and 312 television advertisements.

The outcomes for this project can be measured through the consumer awareness survey. In the past consumer awareness surveys of the Jersey Fresh brand and its attributes have been conducted in 1984-1988, 1993, 1995, 1996, 1999 and 2002 and 823 consumers were surveyed from December 18, 2012 through January 7, 2013 to measure the effectiveness following the 2012 media buy and 854 consumers were measured in September 2013 to measure effectiveness following the 2013 media buy. The most recent survey included 866 consumers in New Jersey, Pennsylvania and Staten Island, New York.

### **Consumer Awareness and Industry Utilization Survey**

Princeton Partners retained the services of the research firm Bruno & Ridgeway to conduct the online consumer survey.

### **Goals and Outcomes Achieved**

The goals of this project were achieved through the completion of the planned television, print, outdoor advertising efforts. Summaries of those efforts can be found in the above project approach section of this final report.

The outcomes for this project can be measured through the consumer awareness survey. In the past consumer awareness surveys of the Jersey Fresh brand and its attributes have been conducted in 1984-1988, 1993, 1995, 1996, 1999 and 2002 and 823 consumers were surveyed from December 18, 2012 through January 7, 2013 to measure the effectiveness following the 2012 media buy and 854 consumers were measured in September 2013 to measure effectiveness following the 2013 media buy.

Princeton Partners of Princeton, New Jersey, in accordance with the State of New Jersey Department of Treasury guidelines, is the new designated advertising services provider to the Jersey Fresh program.

### **Consumer Awareness and Industry Utilization Survey**

Princeton Partners retained the services of the research firm Bruno & Ridgeway to conduct the online consumer survey.

The Executive Summary is below;

“The findings from this survey show that Jersey Fresh remains a strong “brand” presence from a consumer standpoint.

- Both awareness and purchasing of JF are strong and improved from September 2013.
- Compared with September 2013, significantly more consumers say they are more likely to purchase produce labeled as Jersey Fresh.
- Among those familiar with JF, overall positive perceptions continue to rival those of the national brands.

This survey shows several key changes of note vs. the pre-survey.

- Higher recognition of blueberries as a Jersey Fresh crop and slightly higher purchasing.
- Growth in store identification of Jersey Fresh products as well as the proportion of consumers saying they are more likely to buy Jersey Fresh.

In terms of specific JF crops, there is strength but opportunities exist to build them further.

- Awareness and purchase continue to be greatest for tomatoes, followed by corn and blueberries. There is an opportunity to broaden the association of many other crops with Jersey Fresh.
- The produce most readily associated with JF is also more likely to be considered superior to produce from other states. There may be an opportunity to leverage existing superiority perceptions to other crops by emphasizing them as Jersey Fresh produce.

The core needs of the consumer, when buying fresh produce, continue to be freshness, taste/flavor and overall quality.

- Being grown by local farms remains relatively lower in importance, along with longer shelf life. There may be an opportunity to link “local” to the core needs of freshness, taste and quality to help further differentiate Jersey Fresh and insulate it from national brands.

The current standing of Jersey Fresh should continue to be used to refine goals for the future.

- Consideration should be given to possible targets for increased growth of the Jersey Fresh brand, both in terms of the degree of growth expected and the specific geographies in which growth is desired.
- Clearly, a broadening of crops that are associated with Jersey Fresh is an area of opportunity.

In the past surveys consumer awareness surveys were coordinated by the Jersey Fresh program’s advertising contractors and conducted either by the Gallop Organization or Mapes and Ross, Inc. – both leading consumer research firms located in Princeton, NJ. The survey conducted this year measured the outcome of this project using similar questions and was coordinated and conducted in the same manner.

Following the completion of the Jersey Fresh activities in support of the 2013 marketing season for Jersey Fresh products a post project survey was conducted. The survey results can be compared to similar studies seeking the same information that have previously been conducted in the following years; 1984 – 1988, 1993, 1995, 1996, 1999 and 2002. In January 2013 the survey included 823 consumers and in September 2013 the survey included 854 consumers the most recent survey included 866 consumers. In all three surveys the consumers were in New Jersey, eastern Pennsylvania and Staten Island, NY.

Benchmarks taken from past studies were from the period 1984 – 2002 were available to measure the outcomes achieved through this project.

Goals for the results of this project were developed prior to the conduct of this project to establish and quantify the objectives of this project.

Three of the objectives of the past and current tracking study were;

- 1) Determine the inclination of consumers to purchase products identified as Jersey Fresh

- 2) Discover the rate that supermarkets are identifying produce as Jersey Fresh.
- 3) Evaluate awareness of advertising and promotional activities for Jersey Fresh farm products.

The benchmarks, established goals and results achieved through this project are as follows;

- **What is the consumer inclination to purchase fruits and vegetables if they are advertised as Jersey Fresh?**

The Benchmark for this question;

In 2002 was 45%

In January 2013 was 66%

In September 2013 was 70%

The target set for this project was to raise that benchmark to 65% or more for respondents to agree that they are inclined to purchase fruits and vegetables if they are advertised as Jersey Fresh

In October 2014 the percentage of consumers to purchase fruits and vegetables if they are advertised as Jersey Fresh was 67%.

2002 Benchmark; 45%

Goal; 65%

Outcome Achieved; 67%

- **As a consumer are you aware of the promotion of New Jersey Farm products as Jersey Fresh?**

The 2002 benchmark for this question was 41%.

The target set for this project was to raise that awareness benchmark to 50% or more of consumers being aware of the promotion of New Jersey Farm products as Jersey Fresh?

In January 2013; 78% of consumers reported “awareness of Jersey Fresh” as a brand promoting local produce.

In September 2013; 78% of consumers reported “awareness of Jersey Fresh” as a brand promoting local produce.

In October 2014; 79% of consumers reported “awareness of Jersey Fresh” as a brand promoting local produce.

Benchmark; 41%

Goal; 50%

Outcome Achieved; 79%

- **Are you “not likely,” “likely” or “very likely” to ask for New Jersey produce if it is NOT identified?**

The 2002 benchmark for this question is a combined 40% for likely and very likely responses.

In January 2013; 51% of consumers reported “likely” or “very likely” to ask for New Jersey produce if it is NOT identified?  
 In September 2013; 46% of consumers reported “likely” or “very likely” to ask for New Jersey produce if it is NOT identified?  
 In October 2014; 50% of consumers reported “likely” or “very likely” to ask for New Jersey produce if it is NOT identified?

The 2012 survey target was that the “likely” and “very likely” responses will be at least a combined total of 50% of the responses.

2002 Benchmark; 40%  
 Goal; 50%  
 Outcome Achieved; 50%

**Do you perceive New Jersey fruits and vegetables to be of higher quality in comparison to out of state competition?**

The 2014 survey target for preferences was; Tomatoes 75%, Corn 60%, Blueberries 60%.

In September 2013 consumers thought that the following Jersey Fresh commodities were a higher quality product when “compared to the same products from other states.” Tomatoes 78%, Corn 72% and blueberries 62%.

	Tomatoes	Corn	Blueberries
2002 Benchmark;	71%	58%	43%
Goal;	<u>75%</u>	<u>60%</u>	<u>60%</u>
Outcome Achieved;	76%	71%	68%

Perhaps most impressive of all was total consumer awareness and overall opinion of the Jersey Fresh brand in comparison to national produce brands.

**Total Awareness of Specific Brands;**

	January 2013	September 2013	October 2014
Chiquita;	99%	99%	97%
Dole;	99%	99%	99%
DelMonte;	98%	98%	98%
<b>Jersey Fresh;</b>	<b>78%</b>	<b>78%</b>	<b>79%</b>
Ready Pac;	69%	69%	66%
Foxy;	68%	67%	69%
Bonita;	30%	29%	31%

### Overall Opinion of Brand as “Excellent/Very Good”

	January 2013	September 2013	October 2014
<b>Jersey Fresh; 81%</b>		<b>80%</b>	<b>80%</b>
Chiquita;	83%	79%	83%
Dole;	81%	78%	82%
Ocean Spray;	74%	71%	72%
Del Monte;	72%	69%	70%
Foxy;	65%	64%	65%
Ready Pac;	61%	57%	63%
Bonita;	48%	37%	45%

A digital pdf copy of this study is available from the New Jersey Department of Agriculture. For a copy contact; [logan.brown@ag.state.nj.us](mailto:logan.brown@ag.state.nj.us) and Request a copy of the; “September 2013 Jersey Fresh Awareness and Purchase Report.”

### Beneficiaries

In 2013 there were 9,100 farmers in New Jersey working 720,000 acres with the average farm size being 79 acres.

In 2012 New Jersey produced a value of \$462.9 million in fruits and vegetables. According to data from the National Agricultural Statistics Service for the 2012 growing season the Area harvested for the eighteen **fresh market** and 5 major **processing vegetables**, totaled 41,550 acres. This was up 6% from 39,100 acres in 2011. Both fresh market and processing vegetable harvested acres increased. Combined production of fresh and processing vegetable was 360,550 tons, up 16% from 2011. Gross value for all crops increased 2% to \$208.3 million in 2012, compared with \$204.8 million in 2011, despite a 12% decrease in season average prices.

According to preliminary data from the National Agricultural Statistics Service for the 2012 growing season the four major fruit and berry crops grown in New Jersey are apples, blueberries, cranberries, and peaches. The warm weather throughout the spring prompted early blooms and fruit buds. A late frost in April, along with rainstorms and high winds in the summer months, all affected fruit development for many growers. As the season concluded cranberries had higher production, while apples, blueberries, and peaches had lower production. Value of utilized production of these crops totaled \$178.8 million, down one percent from the 2011 total of \$180.8 million.

In 2012 New Jersey produced about \$387 million of fruits and vegetables and about \$347 million of Nursery and greenhouse horticultural products. Every single grower of fruits and vegetables in New Jersey is a potential benefactor of the Jersey Fresh advertising program.

The Specialty Crop Block Grants was utilized to expand the marketing of, and increase the demand for, New Jersey specialty crops through the advertising and promotion of the Jersey Fresh local branding program.

In 2004, a USDA funded Federal-State Marketing Improvement Program study documented the return on investment for the Jersey Fresh branding program. The study which drew upon the then twenty year history of the Jersey Fresh program documented that every dollar spent on the Jersey Fresh

program, increased fruit and vegetable sector sales by \$31.54. According to the 2004 study, increased sales in agricultural products created additional economic activity. The increased economic activity impacted other parts of the economy, namely agricultural suppliers and service providers. In fact each dollar spent on Jersey Fresh promotion resulted in an additional \$22.95 of sales in agricultural support industries and other related industries. Therefore the total additional economic activity to be created by every dollar spent on the Jersey fresh promotional program created \$54.49 in additional economic activity for New Jersey's agricultural economy. ("Returns to the Jersey Fresh Promotional Program, the Impacts of Promotional Expenditures on Farm Cash Receipts in New Jersey," Ramu Godvindasmy, Rutgers the State University, March 2004.)

The potential impact of the \$352,917 of SCBG funds utilized for the support of the Jersey Fresh advertising and promotional program could have been expected to yield an increase of \$11.1 million in specialty crop sales in the State of New Jersey and another \$8.1 million in additional economic activity for New Jersey's agricultural economy.

### **Lessons Learned**

During the three year period of this SCBG project staff learned the need for a continued and consistent product branding and marketing message to maximize the benefit of the Jersey Fresh state branding program for New Jersey producers of fruits and vegetables.

The results of this project document that a modestly funded and well-targeted buy local produce promotion program can compete with much larger and significantly better funded national produce advertising programs and creating economic benefits for small producers (under 71 acres) of specialty crops.

### **Contact Person**

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Final Report  
December 23, 2014

**New Jersey Blueberry Growers Association**

**Project Title**; “Advertising Jersey Fresh Blueberries – 2012”

**Project Summary**

New Jersey remains in the nation’s top 5 blueberry production. In 2010, New Jersey blueberry growers produced over 49 million pounds. Every year acreage devoted to cultivated blueberries has been increasing both domestically and internationally. This increase in competition has made it necessary for the New Jersey Blueberry Growers Association to find ways to maintain existing market share, as well as compete in new markets. The New Jersey Blueberry Growers Association (NJBGA) project applied for funding for a radio advertising campaign to maximize our assets most efficiently, and enable the organization to reach consumers through-out our marketing area.

The New Jersey Blueberry Growers Association is a non-profit organization representing all New Jersey blueberry growers and is dedicated to the promotion, education and research of New Jersey blueberries.

**Project Approach**

The purpose of this grant was to maximize advertising opportunities on behalf of New Jersey produced blueberries during the 2012 growing season. Nationally, New Jersey ranks in the top 5 in the production of blueberries with last year’s crop estimated to be 49 million pounds. Consumer interest in blueberries has grown considerably over the past several years. This increase in consumption has been attributed largely due to the health benefits associated with eating blueberries and products containing blueberries. The industry, both domestically and internationally has responded by increasing acreage to the point where seasonal oversupplies have become a problem.

Highly perishable New Jersey blueberries only have a short market season of between six to eight weeks. This has created a major problem for New Jersey’s blueberry producers who are facing a situation where they must move a highly perishable product, during a short period of time, into an increasingly crowded marketplace.

National Industry trade groups have responded by conducting programs of promotion and research designed to increase consumer consumption through new blueberry products. New Jersey remains a “fresh market” producer whereby most of its blueberries are sold fresh as opposed to being processed into a product.

New Jersey’s fresh market season typically lasts for about six to eight weeks. The New Jersey Blueberry Growers Association sought to use this grant to conduct a consumer oriented radio campaign designed to promote New Jersey produced blueberries. The campaign aired during peak production

weeks, and was broadcast in markets throughout the Northeastern Seaboard. The purpose of these ads was to differentiate New Jersey blueberries to the consumer, and promote them as a nutritious alternative in their diets.

#### Partners Participating in the Project:

Art Galetta, President of the New Jersey Blueberry Growers Association was responsible for representation of New Jersey's blueberry industry and for identifying the needs of the needs of the growers as reflected in this project.

Al Murray, New Jersey Department of Agriculture Council Liaison to the New Jersey Blueberry Industry Advisory Council was responsible for the development of this project proposal.

#### **Goals and Outcomes Achieved**

##### Goals

The project goal was for the New Jersey Blueberry Growers Association (NJBGA) to contract with a professional advertising agency to create a radio commercial, develop a broadcast schedule, and purchase air time.

The radio ads were created and broadcast between July 1, 2012 and July 31, 2012.

The Jersey Fresh Blueberry radio advertisement was played in the following markets; New York City, Boston, MA; Worcester, MA; Cape Cod, MA; Manchester, VT; Portsmouth ME, Philadelphia, PA; Camden, NJ; Wilmington, DE; and the following counties in New Jersey and New York; Somerset, Morristown, Monmouth, Ocean, Nassau and Suffolk.

According to the best Arbitron figures available the reach of the radio stations utilized exceeded 1.3 million listeners.

##### Outcomes

The intended impact of the project was to increase New Jersey blueberry sales by a minimum of 3%. The actual production, price and value were the following;

Year	Production Total	Average Price per Pound	Value of Production
2010	49 million lbs.	\$ 1.28	\$ 62.5 million
2011	62 million lbs.	\$ 1.53	\$ 94.7 million
2012	54 million lbs.	\$ 1.57	\$ 80.8 million

Source; [http://www.nass.usda.gov/Statistics by State/New Jersey/Publications/Fruit Summary/fruitsumm12.pdf](http://www.nass.usda.gov/Statistics_by_State/New_Jersey/Publications/Fruit_Summary/fruitsumm12.pdf)

The post season survey of growers showed that weather was the primary contributing factor to a reduction in production and sales from the 2011 season to the 2012 season. A late frost during bloom in April caused significant damage to New Jersey's blueberry crop in some areas. A few fields also suffered wind and hail damage from strong storms in late June. New Jersey blueberry production totaled 54 million pounds, a decrease of 13 percent from the previous year. The season average price, at \$1.57 per pound, is up 4 cents from last year. The value of utilized production for the 2012 blueberry crop was \$80.8 million, a decrease of 15 percent from 2011.

The NJ Blueberry Growers Association meets several times per year. At the conclusion of the 2012 season, a discussion item revolved around the 2012 advertising campaign, and members reviewed the advertising and promotional efforts conducted. The membership believes that the advertising campaign was effective in driving sales for NJ blueberries. Supermarkets and other retailers support the council's efforts since they are the primary venues that sell NJ blueberries. The membership works with retailers in determining the optimal time to run advertisements. While exact sales data cannot be determined, due to the proprietary nature of the individual business's information, the membership firmly believes the advertising helps create awareness and drive sales at a time when large volumes of blueberries are on the market.

A key indicator that determines the success of any given season is the ratio of blueberries sold on the fresh market as opposed to the blueberries that are put into processing. Fresh market blueberries generate a premium price in the marketplace and bring the grower a greater return. In seasons where there is great consumer demand, more blueberries are sold on the fresh market, and fewer go into processing. In 2012, 90% of NJ Blueberries were sold on the fresh market, and 10% went into processing. 2012 was considered a normal year in terms of volume and crop conditions. The fact that so many blueberries were sold on the fresh market indicates that farmers did meet demand.

The impact of this project's advertising was able to mediate the impact of the poor growing conditions. Due to an increase in demand the actual price per pound did rise from 2011 to 2012.

The competition for New Jersey's blueberry production is similar production in the Carolina's and Michigan. Both of those states have competing production during New Jersey production season. The Carolina crop tends to overlap the beginning of the New Jersey marketing season and Michigan's crop tends to the market in the middle of New Jersey's production season. As a highly perishable crop with a limited shelf life most blueberries need to be sent to the market as soon as practical and cannot for the market forces of supply and demand to turn in their favor.

Each year, the NJ Blueberry Growers Association member tasked with coordinating the media purchase works with the retail trade in synchronizing the NJ Blueberry Grower's advertising efforts with individual retailers advertising efforts on behalf of NJ blueberries. The coordinator reports that NJ blueberries are highly anticipated by both, retailers and the consuming public. Other members of the NJ Blueberry Growers Association report that many retailers "pre-book" blueberry sales before the product has even had a chance to be harvested. In 2012, pre-bookings were up 7 %. Because 2012 was considered a normal crop, quality and supply were satisfactory.

The NJ Blueberry Growers Association employs the services of a professional advertising agency. At the annual media planning meeting, the Association makes known their demographic preferences when the agency selects the appropriate stations. The professional advertising agency follows the Association's instructions when making the media purchase, and submits a list of radio stations and the demographics pertinent to each station for the association's review and approval.

The advertising efforts of this project were instrumental in providing a competitive advantage to New Jersey Growers helping to increase the average price per pound received in 2012.

### **Beneficiaries**

Blueberry production is labor and capital intensive and commercially production is limited to areas with a moderate climate and sandy highly acidic soil which drains well. New Jersey has 148 blueberry farms growing on 7,700 acres which yielded over \$ 80 million for New Jersey's blueberry growers in 2012.

### **Lessons Learned**

The ability to advertise specialty crops in a targeted method during critical growing can help to provide a competitive advantage for those specialty crops.

Although there were no unexpected outcomes this advertising project did help to create a demand to move a specialty crop commodity in a crowded marketplace.

The market for fresh blueberries is greatly influenced by uncontrollable weather conditions plus other variables which can provide great inconsistencies in market conditions from one year to the next. Targeting specific markets with well-timed advertising of specialty crops can help to reduce market uncertainty and provide for the more efficient marketing of specialty crops.

### **Contact Information**

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**Cumberland County Board of Agriculture**

Final Report

December 23, 2014

(Revised 3/20/15)

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**Project Title:**

**“An Outreach Educational Training Program for Growers in Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) and Good Handling Practices (GHP)”**

**Project Summary:**

Food safety has become a major concern for buyers and shippers of fresh produce across the United States. The Food and Drug Administration reports that between 1996 and 2012 there have been 116 confirmed outbreaks attributed to fresh fruits and vegetables. Seventy six percent of those outbreaks are in commodities (lettuce/leafy greens, tomatoes, melons, herbs and berries) which are major commodities grown in New Jersey. Supermarket customers continue to encourage retail establishments to improve food safety and question what supermarkets are doing in this area. This has led to wholesale produce buyers requiring growers to be certified through a third party audit for Good Agricultural Practices and Good Handling Practices. The 2011 and 2012 melon outbreaks increased pressure on growers to obtain a third party food safety certification. Those outbreaks, although not from produce grown in New Jersey, were commodities which are grown during the state’s production season. Growers are receiving letters from buyers saying they must have a third party audit to be able to sell their product.

The New Jersey Department of Agriculture and Rutgers Cooperative Extension have collaborated on food safety trainings since 2000 with funding through our regular budget and grower support. The initial program was started with seed money from a small Cornell Food Safety Program grant. This allowed the program to train a small group of interested growers/distributors and gave them the opportunity to learn about food safety in their operations and to develop plans which could be used in the certification process.

With the passage of the Food Safety Modernization Act and major revisions to audit metrics there is increased interest among growers to learn more about food safety. This grant has allowed the Cumberland County Board of Agriculture to support the food safety program not only in Southern New Jersey, but the whole state.

## **Project Approach**

The first step in the project was to review the training materials developed in previous trainings. Two manuals were updated for wholesale and retail marketers. These manuals continue to be revised each year as new information on food safety and changes in third party audits occur. All the information in the manuals plus additional resource information (i.e. reporting logs, guidance documents for specific commodities, basic food safety plans, etc.) was compiled on a USB flash drive. See appendix 2 for materials developed.

The project was developed using a multi-level approach. Short (30-45 minutes – 35 presentations - see appendix 3) presentations were given to general specialty crop agricultural audiences at local, regional and statewide grower meetings. These were used to introduce the need for food safety and how third party audits fit into it. In-depth trainings (5-6 hours for a total of 24 trainings - see appendix 4) followed the introductory presentations for those who wanted additional training and needed to pass a third party audit. The team collaborated with private companies (supermarkets and wholesale buyers) in some trainings for their growers. After each training the participants were offered the opportunity to have a one-on-one site visit by the two Cooperative Extension personnel from the team (35 walkthroughs). They provided an informal audit for the operation to help growers finalize their food safety plan and evaluate the physical operation.

This type of training and one-on-one contact can only go so far in meeting the needs of agricultural operations since staff and funds are limited. This is especially true when it comes to training farm workers. This was not the intent of this project to provide on farm training. However, the team trained Equal Opportunity Employees in a train-the-trainer format to be able to do that training. They now offer the service as part of farm worker training. The other aspect of third party audits is the need for a written plan. During training sessions the team goes through how to write a plan and provides the materials to help agricultural operations write those plans. However, one session does not meet the needs of growers. There are always questions and some growers have a difficult time putting their ideas to paper. Private consultants have help fill that need. The team has worked with private consultants in the area to train them on writing plans and act as a resource when they have questions.

Information for the grant was also disseminated to the industry through the Rutgers Plant and Pest advisory <http://plant-pest-advisory.rutgers.edu>, NJAES Vegetable Crops Online Resource <http://njveg.rutgers.edu> under the food safety tab on a weekly basis and monthly articles in extension publications.

This project has promoted food safety not only in Cumberland County, but South Jersey and the whole state. Since our growers are all specialty crop growers we have helped a segment of the agricultural industry that is directly impacted by food safety and third party audits. There was a close working relationship between the Cumberland County Board of Agriculture where one member of the team reported progress at monthly meetings. Also, the New Jersey Department of Agriculture (NJDA) was directly involved in training sessions. This helped build understanding between growers, the NJDA and the training team.

The project continues to have impact on growers even after it has concluded. The team continues to train growers and has planned eight sessions for 2014-2015 winter training. They also are developing a series of fact sheets to help growers evaluate their operations.

## **Goals and Outcomes Achieved**

As mentioned in the summary there were 35 short (30-45 minute) presentations; 24 in-depth trainings (5-6 hours) and 35 walkthroughs carried out during the life of the project. This multi-level approach was used to encourage growers to take food safety seriously; then provide in-depth training. The walkthroughs enabled growers to interact on a one-on-one basis with team members. Growers feel more comfortable working one-on-one. The

number of growers who passed a USDA third party audit during the life of the project ranged from 67 to 75. Some wholesale and retail companies specify which audit company can be used thus the USDA number fluctuates. At least twenty operations are audited by one of the following companies, but were trained in our program: Primus Laboratories, Safe Quality Foods (SQF), British Consortium (BRC), AIB, Global GAP and Davis Fresh.

In 2013 the team increased exposure through electronic media. There was more emphasis placed on using the on line Plant and Pest Advisory Website to disseminate information. From January 2013 to the end of the project 111 articles were posted with subscribers increasing from 1,700 to 2,067 and page views increased from 73,728 to 121,185. The use of the Plant and Pest Advisory Website contribution continues and web presence has been expanded to include a Facebook page and a twitter feed.

The long term goal of the Cumberland County Board of Agriculture is to encourage all fruit and vegetable growers in Cumberland County and New Jersey to become more aware of food safety issues and make changes to their operations as needed. This is an ongoing process since food safety is a moving target. The goals of the project were met by our team and they will continue to work with growers to improve food safety into the future. Most goals were accomplished during the project. Following is the summary of the accomplishments. All logs and checklist to support a grower's food safety plan are now on line <http://plant-pest-advisory.rutgers.edu> and <http://njveg.rutgers.edu>. These will be continually updated as there are changes to third party audits. The team's goal for the future is to make everything interactive saving grower's time and expense.

The tabletop display has been redesigned to accommodate both wholesale and retail grower meetings. There are many aspects that are similar, but it is important to be able to point out areas specific to each group. The display has been used at the New Jersey Agricultural Convention and Trade Show (3 years), Northeast Organic Farmers Association, New Jersey (2 years) and New Jersey Farm Bureau Annual meeting (2 years). This display will be used on a continual basis to encourage growers to implement new food safety practices.

One of three fact sheets has been published (Melendez, M and W Kline 2014. Worker Health and Hygiene. FS 1230 Rutgers Cooperative Extension). The fact sheet covers all aspects of health and hygiene for workers and visitors to a farm operation. The other two are being submitted for review prior to publication.

Thirty-one PowerPoint presentations were developed during the life of the project and 21 of those reviewed as new information became available. The surveys from the individual trainings and a web based survey is being used to make changes to the program for the future. An online survey was carried out in spring 2013. Surveys were sent to 248 training participants who had taken the in-depth courses with a return rate of 12.9%. Ninety-two were wholesale producers which was the target audience for trainings. The farm sized ranged from 1-9 acres to over 2000 acres with the majority over 220 acres. Seventeen percent were beginning farmers and 28.6% had not had food safety training previously. Writing standard operating procedures (SOP) and carrying out farm risk assessments have been emphasized in recent trainings since they are integral parts of any third party audit. Sixty percent had completed their SOPs and 28.6% have started. The results were similar for farm risk assessments with 64.3% completed and 25% started writing them. Produce operations must have a written food safety plan to complete an audit. As a result of the training, 75% had completed their plan and 17.9% have started. Documentation (sanitation logs, training logs, etc.) is important for any food safety plan. Over 78% of farms document their activities and 14.3% have started documenting activities. Sixty-seven percent have passed a third party audit after completing their plans while 32% have not had any audit or do not plan on having an audit. Growers question the cost of audits and whether it will generate new business. Forty-six percent indicated that it did not generate new business, but 88% indicated they would have lost business without the audit. Ninety-four percent feel

more comfortable talking to customers about food safety on their farms. This is especially important for retail growers. One hundred percent of participants in the survey indicated they would recommend the training to other produce growers.

The team carried out pre and post surveys at each session. Some suggestions from those evaluations were used (1) to expand the information provided on the flash drive and (2) provide copies of all PowerPoint presentations. Both suggestions have been implemented in training. Individual presentations are rated on a 1-5 (poor to excellent) scale. All presentations were rated between 4 and 5. Some of the comments included: “This was probably one of the best lectures and was detailed”; “The only thing more useful could have been a private session”; and “This presentation created more of an awareness and I will share this information with my partners.”

The success of the project was to raise awareness of food safety to the produce industry in Cumberland County and New Jersey. This was carried out through the in-depth trainings where 608 individuals were trained and approximately 100 operations passed their third party audits. The Cumberland County Board of Agriculture demonstrated that it is working collaboratively with the New Jersey Department of Agriculture and Rutgers Cooperative Extension on a project which supports the industry.

The resources created are available on-line at the following address:

<http://plant-pest-advisory.rutgers.edu/food-safety-publications/>

### **Beneficiaries**

The focus of this grant was to train wholesale produce growers since this is the largest segment of fruit and vegetable growers in Cumberland County and they had an immediate need. Wholesale buyers became interested since they were encouraging the growers to have a food safety plan and to get third party audited. Some trainings became a partnership between the buyers and the food safety team. In the last year, small retail growers began to take more interest with the pending Food Safety Modernization Act. The team has seen greater attendance from that group and more questions on a daily basis. In turn, consumers benefited from improved food safety.

The number of beneficiaries is divided into two groups. Those that attended the single session presentations (1,625) and those that took the in-depth training (608). Additionally, the entire agricultural community has experienced a greater awareness of food safety issues as farmers communicate with one another. Cumberland County is the large agricultural county in New Jersey in produce production. It is the third largest segment of the economy in the county. Growers are being told by buyers if they do not have a food safety audit they will not be able to sell their produce thus not only will growers go out of business, but the county will have a reduced economic base.

### **Lessons Learned**

Food safety is a continual moving target. There are always new research results, government information, outbreaks and new sources of information. It would take at least one full time person to try and keep up with this information. The team was made up of three individuals who had other responsibilities and could only contribute 10-12% of their time to the project. Food safety and supporting growers through research, education and extension take more time than part-time individuals can contribute. This will become even more of a factor as the Food Safety Modernization Act is implemented. As presently envisioned, all growers over \$25,000 in sales will need to be trained over the next few years and trainers will need to be certified to be able to give the training. This means individuals now engaged in food safety education will even be in more demand.

We have seen a continual expanding interest by the agricultural community in food safety. Even growers who have been reluctant to pursue a third party audit have made changes in their operations to improve food safety. It is not easy working with some small growers who only want to grow crops and do not see the benefit in new food safety practices. It is a challenge to convince growers if they cannot see the financial reasons for making the changes. Growers in Cumberland County are just starting to see there may be some financial benefit.

The team did not complete three summer practical farm sessions. Two were held (one South and one North Jersey). Growers have been reluctant to use their farms as examples for these sessions.

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**Additional Information:**

**Materials Developed for Training**

**Note: These materials were updated each year, but only major revisions are listed.**

**2011:**

Kline, W.L. (5<sup>th</sup> edition) 2011. Good Agricultural Practices (GAPs) Developing a Plan for Third-Party Audits. Rutgers Cooperative Extension – CD Rom

Henderson, S.W. and W.L. Kline. 2011 (Revised). “The Henderson Farm Grower Food Safety Manual. 15p

Kline, W.L. 2011. (Revised) “Developing a Plan for Third-Party Audits” including a CD-Rom was revised to reflect changes in food safety research and changes in the USDA audit. 160p.

Kline, W.L. and S. Henderson. 2011. “Developing a Third-Party Audit Plan for Wholesale Buyers,” including a CD-Rom was written to help first level buyers develop their food safety plan. 86p.

**2013:**

Melendez, M. and W.L. Kline 2013. FDA Q&A – Food Safety Modernization Act, Proposed Produce Rule. 14p.

Melendez, M. 2013. “Food Safety Regulations for New Jersey Beekeepers”. 1p.

Melendez, M. and W.L. Kline. 2013. Food Safety for Retail Marketers. 155p.

Kline, W.L. (6<sup>th</sup> edition) 2012. “Good Agricultural Practices (GAPs) Developing a Plan for Third-Party Audits”. Rutgers Cooperative Extension – including a CD-Rom was revised to reflect changes in food safety research and changes in the USDA audit. 160p.

Henderson, S.W. and Kline, W.L. 2013 (Revised). “The Henderson Farm Grower Food Safety Manual”. 15p.

Kline, W.L. and S. Henderson. 2013. “Developing a Third-Party Audit Plan for Wholesale Buyers” including a CD-Rom was written to help first level buyers develop their plans.

### **Power Point Presentations Created for Food Safety Teaching**

#### **2011:**

- Agricultural Food Safety Research and Education
- The Importance of Food Safety in Vegetable Production
- Water Testing and Treatment
- Problems Observed in Mock Audits
- USDA Checklist for Third Party Audits
- Update on Food Safety Issues
- Food Safety in Urban Agriculture
- What Initiated the Need for a Food Safety Plan
- Food Safety Self-Assessment on the Farm
- Food Safety for Processing Tomato Growers
- Post-harvest Handling Practices to Improve Food Safety

#### **2012:**

- Agricultural Food Safety Research and Education (Revised)
- The Importance of Food Safety in Vegetable Production (Revised)
- Water Testing and Treatment (Revised)
- Problems Observed in Mock Audits (Revised)
- USDA Checklist for Third Party Audits (Revised)
- Update on Food Safety Issues (Revised)
- Food Safety in Urban Agriculture (Revised)

- What Initiated the Need for a Food Safety Plan (Revised)
- Food Safety Self-Assessment on the Farm (Revised)
- Food Safety for Processing Tomato Growers (Revised)
- Post-harvest Handling Practices to Improve Food Safety (Revised)

**2013:**

- Agricultural Food Safety Research and Education (Revised)
- The Importance of Food Safety in Vegetable Production (Revised)
- Water Testing and Treatment (Revised)
- Problems Observed in Mock Audits (Revised)
- USDA Checklist for Third Party Audits (Revised)
- Update on Food Safety Issues (Revised)
- Food Safety in Urban Agriculture (Revised)
- What Initiated the Need for a Food Safety Plan (Revised)
- Food Safety Self-Assessment on the Farm (Revised)
- Post-harvest Handling Practices to Improve Food Safety (Revised)
- Maintaining Quality at the Wholesale/Retail Level
- FSMA & the Produce Safety Rule: Its Impact on the Produce Industry
- GAPs for Direct Market Growers: Solutions to Common Problems
- Proposed Rules FDA Food Safety Modernization Act
- Conducting a Risk Assessment of Your Farm: Helpful Hints
- Writing a Standard Operating Procedure for Your Farm

- Where Growers are Losing Points on Harmonized Audits
- Survey of New Jersey Farms for Foodborne Pathogens in Tomatoes, Spinach, Irrigation Water and Soil Samples
- Writing Standard Operating Procedures
- Food Safety and the Impact on the Produce Industry
- Food Safety and Small Growers (webinar)
- Food Safety Legislation
- The Effect of the Food Safety Modernization Act on New Jersey Farmers
- Farm Food Safety: GAPs
- Food Safety Regulations for New Jersey Beekeepers
- GAPs For Small Farms
- Creating a Farm Map
- Writing Your Farm Food Safety Plan
- Writing Risk Assessments

### **Presentations at Various Grower Meetings**

Thirty-five presentations were made concerning food safety and third party audits to 1,625 individuals.

#### **2011:**

November 8 – “Food Safety on the Farm, New Brunswick, NJ

November 14 – “Assessing Food Safety on the Farm”, Bridgewater, NJ

December 6 – “Microbial Food Safety Issues of Organic Production”, New Brunswick, NJ

December 8 – “Major Food Safety Outbreaks and How They Affect the Industry”, Vineland, NJ

#### **2012:**

January 28 – “Worker Health & Hygiene”, NOFA Pre-Conference

January 30 – “GAPs for New Jersey Farms, Annie’s Project

February 15 – “Food Safety Training” – North Jersey Commercial Vegetable Growers Meeting

February 21 – “Food Safety Training” – Annual Processing Tomato Growers Meeting

March 28 – “Food Safety Training” Bridgeton Rotary Association  
August 2 – “Farm to School Food Safety”, Rutgers Eco-Complex  
August 7 – “Farm to School Food Safety”, Rutgers Cooperative Extension Warren County  
August 9 – “Food Safety in Foodservice”, Team Nutrition Grow Healthy New Jersey School Foodservice Training  
August 14 – “Food Safety in Foodservice”, Team Nutrition Grow Healthy New Jersey School Foodservice Training

**2013:**

January 27 – “GAPs for Small Farms”, NOFA Winter Conference  
February 21 – Annual Processing Tomato Growers Meeting  
February 26 – “Good Agricultural Practices”, Women in Agriculture Conference  
March 11 – “Sampling for Human Pathogens on New Jersey Farms”, Mercer County Board of Agriculture  
March 20 – “FSMA Update”, NJDFMA Rutgers Cooperative Extension Middlesex County  
March 20 – New Jersey Direct Farmers and Marketers Association -  
March 28 – Integrated Crop Management Vegetable Meeting -  
April 3 – Sunny Valley International Growers Meeting -  
April 26 – Donio Produce Growers Meeting -  
May 6 – “Sampling for Human Pathogens on New Jersey Farms”, Mercer County Master Gardeners  
June 1 – “Food Safety Regulations for New Jersey Beekeepers”, NJ Beekeepers of Morris County  
July 16 – “FSMA Update”, NJDFMA Duffield Farm Market  
October 22 – NJ Department of Agriculture and NJ Farm Bureau FSMA Update Meeting -  
December 5 – “What is Food Safety Impacting the Produce Industry”, NJ Agribusiness Association -

**2014:**

February 4 – “Survey of New Jersey Farms”, NJ Vegetable Conference, Atlantic City, New Jersey  
February 5 – “Food Safety Considerations for Agri-tourism Operations”, NJ Vegetable Conference, Atlantic City, New Jersey  
February 14 – “Food Safety Issues for Direct Market Farmers, Pittstown, NJ  
February 21 – “Food Safety and Grower Survey”, Freehold, NJ  
February 25 – “FSMA Update”, Salem County Pesticide Meeting  
March 7 – NJDA Emergency Food Distribution Points Webinar –  
March 27 – “The Impact of the FDA Food Safety Modernization Act on New Jersey Potato Growers”, Bridgeton, NJ  
June 26 – “Food Safety for the Blueberry Industry”, Hammonton, NJ  
July 10 – NJDA Emergency Food Distribution Points Webinar –  
August 21 – “New Information on the Food Safety Front”, Bridgeton, NJ  
September 10 – “Food Safety and the Produce Industry”, Edison, NJ  
September 11 – “Food Safety and the Produce Industry”, Edison, NJ

### **In-depth Trainings**

- Twenty-four training sessions (5-6 hours/session) were held in food safety and how to prepare for third party audits. There were 608 participants in these sessions. Participants were given a pre and posttest to evaluate their understanding of food safety. After the training, individual growers were provided technical assistance either over the phone, email or with onsite visits at their request.

### **2012 Trainings:**

- January 17 – “Water Testing, Grower Experience & Produce Traceability”, 2012, Atlantic Coast Ag Convention & Trade Show, Atlantic City, New Jersey
- January 27 – “Third Party Audit Training”, NOFA-Duke Farm, Princeton, New Jersey
- February 17 – “Wegman’s GAPs Food Safety Training”, Rutgers Cooperative Extension Burlington County, Westampton, New Jersey
- February 22 – “Food Safety & Third Party Audit Training”, Rutgers Cooperative Extension Cumberland County, Millville, New Jersey
- March 20 – “Blueberry Food Safety Training”, Philip E. Marucci Center for Blueberry & Cranberry Research and Extension Center, Chatsworth, New Jersey
- March 21 – “Donio’s Food Safety Training”, Tomasello Winery, Hammonton, New Jersey

### **2013 Trainings:**

- January 9 – “Wegman’s Food Safety Training”, Rutgers Cooperative Extension Burlington County, Westampton, New Jersey
- January 27 – “Third Party Audit Training”, NOFA-Duke Farm, Princeton, New Jersey
- February 6 – “NJ Ag Convention Food Safety Updates Workshop”, 2013 Atlantic Coast Ag Convention & Trade Show, Atlantic City, New Jersey
- February 7 – “NJ Ag Convention Food Safety/Harmonized Audit Training”, 2013 Atlantic Coast Ag Convention & Trade Show, Atlantic City, New Jersey
- February 20 – “Blueberry Food Safety Training”, Philip E. Marucci Center for Blueberry & Cranberry Research and Extension Center, Chatsworth, New Jersey
- March 1 – “Food Safety & Harmonized Audit Training”, Rutgers Cooperative Extension Cumberland County, Millville, New Jersey
- April 19 – Food Safety for Organic Growers, Trenton, NJ
- December 12 – “Introduction to Food Safety & Third Party Audits for Beginners”, Rutgers Cooperative Extension Cumberland County, Millville, New Jersey

### **2014 Trainings:**

- January 15 – “Wegman’s Food Safety Training”, Rutgers Cooperative Extension Burlington County, Westampton, New Jersey
- January 17 – “Food Safety & Good Agricultural Practice Audit Training”, Wakeferns, Edison, New Jersey
- February 4 – “Food Safety Update Training”, Atlantic Coast Ag Convention & Trade Show, Atlantic City, New Jersey
- February 6 – “Food Safety for Wholesale and Retail Marketers”, Atlantic Coast Ag Convention & Trade Show, Atlantic City, New Jersey
- February 19 – “Blueberry Food Safety Training”, Philip E. Marucci Center for Blueberry & Cranberry Research and Extension, Chatsworth, New Jersey

- February 26 – “Good Agricultural Practices & Farm Food Safety Writing Workshop”, Rutgers Cooperative Extension Mercer County, Trenton, New Jersey
- March 19 – “Introduction to Food Safety and Third Party Audits for Beginners”, Rutgers NJ Agricultural Experiment Station Clifford E. & Melda C. Snyder Research and Extension Farm, Pittstown, New Jersey
- March 26 – “Good Agricultural Practices & Farm Food Safety Writing Workshop”, Rutgers Cooperative Extension, Mercer County, Trenton, New Jersey
- June 5 – “Worker Hygiene: Train the Trainer Workshop”, Rutgers Cooperative Extension Cumberland County, Millville, New Jersey

**Jersey Fruit Cooperative Assn., Inc.**

**Project Title:** “*Development of Efficient Item-Level Traceability Solutions for Blueberry & Peach Growers and Packers*”.

**Project Summary:**

Recently the Produce Traceability Initiative (PTI), the Food Modernization Act (FSMA), as well as more and more retail customers have dictated more stringent requirements to comply with traceability their Food Safety requirements.

The goal of this project was the implementation of an efficient item-level traceability PTI solution for all “Jersey Fruit” blueberry and peach growers/packers. This capability will give growers the capability to conduct efficient product recalls on narrow batches of fruit.

New supply chain technologies, including 2D barcodes, GSI GTIN schemes, and voice pick technologies along with improved computer speeds, improved web-based data bases, and improved Smartphone technologies have made improved traceability systems viable. These technologies also provide the framework to enhance the marketing and quality assurance for fresh produce products .Supply chain management vendors are developing systems for item-level traceability and PTI compliant case-level traceability, but most of these systems can be complicated and costly as well as the design of such systems are very dependent of the work flow of the specific packing house operation. Our goal was to develop a system that was easy to setup, low cost, acceptable by retail customers, and could be used on an as needed basis .Therefore this project was focused on implementing this type of system on a relatively large pilot scale across several packing house workflow scenarios to better meet the needs for all growers.

The importance of this project was to ensure we could meet the demand of retailers who required PTI at case level in a timely manner. While the timeline varies from customer to customer it is eminent that this requirement is coming in the near future. Some retailers presently are already requiring case level traceability. We believed that it was critical to be at the forefront with PTI-compliant case coding giving the cooperative full competitiveness in the market.

**Project Approach:**

Work Plan:

- Identified and setup a committee consisting of Bob Von Rohr, Cecilia Allende, Francisco Allende, Dr Lewis DeEugenio, Jeff Danner, Joe Berenato.
- We identified Eastern Propak for New Jersey Peaches, who packs exclusively all peaches for “Jersey Fruit CO-OP”, which includes the growers of Summit City Farms, Heilig Orchards and Gala Farms to be participants in the pilot PTI compliant case level coding implementation study.

We identified the following New Jersey blueberry growers/packing houses, who are members of the “Jersey Fruit Co-Op” to be participants in the pilot PTI compliant case level coding implementation study.

- o Big Buck Farms
- o Clark Farms
- o Glossy Farms
- o LoSasso Farms
- o Stoney Farms
- o Whalen Farms

Based on information available from the Produce Traceability Initiative Board, we used the 7 PTI Milestones they had established as guidelines toward implementation of this project.

We identified Famous Software to build the program that meet our needs to achieve viable item-level traceability solutions that were PTI compliant. Since we used Famous software to manage our inventory and sales orders, we felt they were this was most cost efficient approach to use as well as its ease of use. They were the best value for our needs at this point.

Cecilia Allende contacted Global Standards One (GSI) to establish/register GS1 Data Bar Prefixes for the all “Jersey Fruit” brands as well as “Little Buck” brands.

Set up GS1 Data Driver to maintain & manage GTIN list.

Purchased Famous Software Update which was required to update log and batches for GTIN’s.

Cecilia Allende assigned item reference numbers to all items by item/pack/size/weight/origin/variety.

Cecilia Allende worked with Famous Systems to interface the “Jersey Fruit” GSI data into the Famous Software system.

Bob Von Rohr contacted major retailers to determine what expectations were required from them to implement a case code system that would meet everyone’s needs. Knowing that technology changes rapidly, we moved forward cautiously realizing that new advances would be coming with reduced cost. Thus we moved forward with PTI on an as needed application format. This would eliminate the immediate need for an automated case label application and we would utilize a hand-gun applied application. It was determined that in order to have an efficient/unified PTI program, that all “Jersey Fruit” grower/packing facilities need to be involved.

We identified “Workflow One” as the vendor to supply the needed hardware i.e.: printers, labels, hand applicators, rewinders, applicators, cores and ribbons.

Hardware was setup at identified growers and packing houses,

Test runs were performed at all locations to ensure hardware worked properly

Test PTI labels were run and verified for readability by vendors

First live production run done with orders to Walmart which were received without problems.

1. The funds used to setup a Food Safety PTI case level program for “Jersey Fruit” peaches and blueberries could also be used for other fresh produce commodities.

For other commodities the same hardware equipment could be utilized. The commodities would need to be setup with GTINS and downloaded batch and lots into a Software program similar to Famous Systems to interface programs.

2. All members of the Specialty Grant committee contributed to the success and completion of this project

a. Dr Lewis DeEugenio chairperson with insight on the ongoing process and from the perspective from a New Jersey peach grower.

b. Bob Von Rohr – Project Manager who provided insight from a retailer’s perspective. Coordinated responsibilities of all committee partners to ensure completion. Worked on securing hardware equipment needed to facilitate online execution of PTI.

c. Cecilia Allende managed and coordinated GTIN setup of all items as well as integrating Data with Famous Software.

d. Jeff Danner provided insight from a Peach Packing House facility perspective. Since Eastern Propak packs all the “Jersey Fruit” peaches it was important that this process met the workflow and execution at this facility

e. Joe Beranato provided insight from the viewpoint of a “Jersey Fruit” blueberry grower and packing house. This was critical is ensure that the workflow process could be easily managed and executed.

f. Francisco Allende provide insight from a peach grower’s perspective as well has his expertise with the Famous Software system. He also provided insight on packing house requirements.

### **Goal and Outcomes Achieved**

1. Primary Goal was for was to have the “Jersey Fruit” blueberry and peach growers/packing houses to fully implement PTI compliant case-level traceability for the 2012-13 season. Since many retailers had not finalized their PTI requirements till the later part of 2013 we felt it necessary to push back the PTI implementation on our end to 2014. We wanted to ensure that our efforts and execution for this project were aligned properly with the major retailers.

- a. The following is a partial list of companies that hail from across the fresh produce supply chain that are participating members of the PTI board. This shows the wide scope of interest in PTI case labeling.
  - i. Associated Wholesale Growers, C>H. Robinson Worldwide, Food Lion, Four Seasons, Publix Supermarkets, Supervalu, Kroger, Wakefern, Walmart and Whole Foods.
  
- b. The following is a list of some major retailers who are either presently requiring PTI case level labeling or will be moving in that direction in the near future.
  - i. Ahold, Costco, Food Lion, Publix, Walmart, Wegmans, Whole Foods.
  
- c. The direct quantified benefit for the 2014 season by implementing this project was \$993,900 in additional sales for New Jersey growers.. As this program is rolled out by more fresh produce supply companies it could have a potential impact of approximately \$2+ million in additional sales over the next several years. The yearly quantitative benefit will increase as more supply chain customers mandate this program of PTI.

It seemed that the PTI requirements from retailer to retailer had different requirements and we wanted to develop a plan that would meet everyone's needs. We had contacted our major retail suppliers to get updated on their specific needs regarding PTI case level coding. We also contacted the PTI board for any insight they could provide regarding label requirements. Through these efforts we had established a PTI label that we felt would generically meet their needs. I have included a sample photo of the PTI label that was created on the last page of this Final Performance Summary. Another goal was to be able to trace back any peach or blueberry case that was sent out to a retailer with a PTI case label. We were able to internally do a mock recall with a retailer to ensure this goal we met. Not only was this product recall successful, but it was done a more efficient and timely manner. This enabled us to trace back any case to the farm, field, date; and one step forward, i.e. customer(s). Since Sunny Valley Int. must perform mock recalls as part of their food safety practices, the PTI ensured our success toward Primuslabs Food Safety Audits.

Our secondary gals of this project was to determine if employing high level item-level and case-level traceability solutions can enhance the marketing of fresh blueberries and peaches as well as enhance quality assurance practices through feedback through feedback from the retail distribution level as well as at the retail store level. It was determined that the marketing advantage with PTI is with the Supermarket Chains since they are the ones mandating this requirement. The consumer has no knowledge of the PTI trace back system, thus they rely on the Supermarket Retailer to ensure the product they are purchasing meets all the Food Safety requirements.

We wanted to implement a PTI system that was easy to use, adaptable to different label requirements, low cost and could be used on an as needed basis. We feel we have achieved this goal in every respect. As more and more retailers develop their capabilities to receive PTI label, we can more forwarded with better high tech systems. We have laid a very good foundation with the PTI system we designed.

While we accomplished our established goals, the initial short term achievements will grow over time as more retailers are technologically advanced to receive product with PTI labels. We have succeeded in establish an excellent foundation to grow with PTI.

It is hard to quantify the actual success of such a project. What needs to be considered is that without the implementation of a PTI case level program we would not have the marketing/sales ability to capture sales of New Jersey peaches and blueberries with many of the major retailers throughout the United States.

### **Beneficiaries**

1. All the “Jersey Fruit Co-Op” peach/blueberry growers and packing house facilities have benefited from this project. Without the capabilities of a PTI case level coding system they would not be able to market their product to many of the major retailers and wholesalers through North America. While this project was developed through a grant for “Jersey Fruit”, many of the practices can be used by other growers and packing houses within the Garden State. It is a good starting foundation for others to use as a model for developing a PTI case level system of their own.

2. “Jersey Fruit Co-Op” growers/ packing house facilities and sale/marketing agents that directly benefited from this project

a. Summit City and Heilig Orchards which are NJ Peach growers

b. Eastern ProPak which packs all “Jersey Fruit” peaches

c. Eleven New Jersey blueberry growers with packing facilities

d. Sunny Valley Int which does all the sales & marketing for “Jersey Fruit”.

### **Lessons Learned:**

1. Some of the lessons we had learned during the process of completing this program was:

a. The initial startup date proposed by the Produce Traceability Initiative (PTI) leadership council has had numerous setbacks regarding the original startup date of November 2013. Lack of agreement with Chain Stores / Buyer on what the requirements need to be to fit their operation. We should have stepped back at least 6 months until everyone had their ducks in a row before moving forward.

b. Technology changes rapidly and what was cutting edge one day can become obsolete in a short time. This is why we slowed down our efforts initially till more options were researched. We had made the decision to later on to take an “as needed approach” to ensure we minimize cost and efficiencies till technology caught up with project requirements.

c. We needed to make sure that simplicity of use was forefront. Initially we had thought that high tech in-line system was the right direction to take. But with cost in the tens of thousands of dollars per facility we moved toward a manual system until cost and efficiency of technology came more in line.

d. There was no one size fits all to PTI case level labeling. We needed to develop a generic approach then fit out budget and could be used by all types/size growers. We realized that New Jersey has a short window on opportunity for sales, so at this point it did not make sense to invest large sums of monies at this point.

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**Outer Coastal Plain Vintners Association**

Final Performance Report

December 29, 2015

*(Revised March 20, 2015)*

**PROJECT TITLE:**

**“Establishing Identity for New Jersey Viticulture”**

**PROJECT SUMMARY:**

New Jersey has the potential for consistently producing among the highest quality wine grapes in the East and a wide variety of cultivars are currently successfully grown in the State. Yet a recognizable identity for New Jersey grown grapes and wine has yet to be developed. The purpose of this proposal was to better position the New Jersey grape growing community to meet the increasing demand for unique, high quality, locally grown wine grapes and to foster continued growth of the industry.

USDA/NJDA Specialty Crop Grant 12-25-B-0938 awarded for the years 2010-2011 to our Outer Coastal Plain Vineyard Association (OCPVA) helped us determine the number, type and acreage of grape varieties grown in New Jersey and specifically in the Outer Coastal Plain American Viticultural Area (OCP AVA).

From the information provided we recognized the need to focus on a small number of varieties that could grow well and provide high quality wine grapes. We identified two specific goals that could have significant impacts on New Jersey’s ability to create a unique viticultural and winemaking identity. These two items represent both short and long term undertakings that create a specific “brand” for New Jersey and the Outer Coastal Plain.

The first goal was to immediately develop a marketable wine blend made of red grapes that are currently grown in the Outer Coastal Plain that can be utilized to create a unique wine product that will be identified solely with New Jersey and the Outer Coastal Plain. We have developed and trademarked that blend as “**Coeur d’Est**” which means “Heart of the East”. It is now being commercially produced and sold by wineries of our OCPVA with great success.

The second goal was to determine an individual grape variety that can be readily identified with the Outer Coastal Plain. We identified four uncommon grape varieties from Northern Italy which we sought to evaluate for quality wine grape production. These include Casetta, two crosses of Teroldego and Lagrein as well as an unnamed white cross. We have imported these varieties and they are currently being released to us from testing and quarantine at Foundation Plant Services (FPS) in California and will be grown and evaluated at vineyards in New Jersey. Teroldego and Lagrein are currently under evaluation

## **PROJECT APPROACH:**

We sought to achieve our goal of helping to establish a favorable identity for New Jersey winegrowing through the production of high quality wine grapes in New Jersey by doing two things:

- 1) Selecting high quality red varieties already currently grown in the region to create a **proprietary blend** that can be made and marketed by New Jersey wineries from grapes grown in Outer Coastal Plain American Viticultural Area (OCP AVA).
- 2) Using selected varieties from Northern Italy, specifically the Trentino-Alto Adige region, to identify a limited number of uncommon varieties that can be readily identified and marketed as a quality variety unique to the region.

We contracted the services of Scientific Marketing Services to aid us in several of the aspects of achieving these goals. Dan Ward of Rutgers served as co-PI. A Rutgers facility served to host the symposium in which the imported grapes of this project were discussed and as a repository for one of the imported grape varieties (Casetta) after release from quarantine at FPS.

### **Approach to the first goal (the proprietary blend):**

We surveyed existing grape growers and winery owners to determine the red varieties they considered most promising for the Outer Coastal Plain based on their success in growing those varieties and the quality of the wines made from them. We conducted blending trials of wines made from various varieties currently being produced in our OCP AVA to determine the number and type of varieties to be used for the proposed proprietary blend. We then made a final determination of what the proposed blend would consist of.

We conducted name searches and contests to identify a suitable name for the proprietary blend that was evocative of the region and the Outer Coastal Plain. With the aid of an attorney, we completed the lengthy search and legal process to trademark the chosen name and preserve the right of the Outer Coastal Plain Vineyard Association, its members and licensees to exclusively use, license and market the proprietary name.

### **Approach to the second goal (the Italian grape varieties):**

Though our ongoing relationship with Dr. Marco Stefanini, a grape researcher and breeder at the Foundation Edmund Mach (FEM) in the Trentino-Alto Adige region of Northern Italy, we identified and imported four uncommon grape varieties. We established a contract with Foundation Plant Services (FPS) in California for testing and quarantine of these varieties prior to their further propagation by us in the United States. These included a red variety indigenous to the Trentino region (Casetta) and three Italian crosses produced by Dr. Stefanini at FEM. We coordinated the importation of these vines to the United States from the FEM to the FPS. We have indicated to FEM the intent of use of these vines when released by FPS to us

“Complete Disease Testing Panel (ELISA, Field & Herbaceous) and Concurrent Disease Elimination Treatment, including pre-treatment testing panel only; used to qualify foreign selections for release from federal quarantine”. We decided to import four varieties instead of five as indicated in the grant proposal because we wanted to limit costs and because we saw no significant advantage of importing the additional cross.

Since two of the varieties we imported are crosses of Teroldego and Lagrein, we also decided to evaluate the growth of these parent vines in New Jersey. To evaluate Teroldego and Lagrein we chose four established commercial vineyards in New Jersey that have differing degree days and growing season lengths as demonstrated by the results of our 2010-2011 USDA/NJDA Specialty Crop Grant findings. These vineyards planted 10 vines each of Teroldego and Lagrein grafted on to C3309 rootstock. The vines were purchased and delivered to us from a commercial grape vine nursery (Vintage Nursery, Wasco, CA 93280) in the US in the spring of 2013, as they were not available for purchase in the spring of 2012.

We published and distributed to each participating vineyard a reference guide for **Teroldego and Lagrein** in terms of disease susceptibility, winter injury, vine productivity and other characteristics as available in the literature.

The 20-vine trial plots were established, maintained and managed by the vineyards using uniform growing practices and guidelines of the Outer Coastal Plain Vineyard Association. Each vineyard/ vineyard manager selected has significant wine grape growing experience; nonetheless, we (Dan Ward and Larry Coia) conducted an on-site training session for the use of these techniques and produced a background information booklet for these varieties. We also carried out on-site validation of the plantings at each vineyard with each vineyard manager.

### **GOALS AND OUTCOMES ACHIEVED:**

#### **The Proprietary Blend-**

We determined that two to five varieties of the following five varieties could make up the blend: Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc, Chambourcin, Merlot, and Syrah. No variety can make up more than 50% of the blend. Chambourcin must make up at least 25% of the blend while Syrah and Cabernet Sauvignon are limited to no more than 25% each. Other parameters for the blend were also established such as the amount of residual sugar (< 0.5%) as well as receiving a minimum score equivalent to a silver medal from an independent third party tasting analysis.

The initial name chosen for the blend was “**Cotiere**” which means “Coastal” but this name was abandoned after a trademark search indicated it was already in use. We then chose a second potential brand name of “**Coeur d’Est**” and were eventually able to trademark this name.

All wineries (currently 26) in the Outer Coastal Plain have access to the production of **Coeur d’Est**. There are 11 wineries that have contracted with the OCPVA to make **Coeur d’Est**. Eight of the 11 wineries already have **Coeur d’Est** in production. We retained the Beverage Tasting Institute located in Chicago to evaluate and score each winery’s **Coeur d’Est**. So far, all eight wines submitted have achieved a score of 85 to 92 and thus have met the sensory evaluation requirement to produce **Coeur d’Est** commercially. Additional wineries are now interested in producing **Coeur d’Est** and additional acreage of the chosen five varieties will need to be planted to meet winery demand. We have thus met and exceeded our goals for this blend as established in the grant proposal.

#### **The Imported Italian varieties:**

In early 2012 we imported four promising grape varieties from FEM in Northern Italy; Casetta, an indigenous and successful commercial red variety grown in Trento, and three varieties developed by Dr Stefanini including two red crosses of Lagrein and Teroldego (F1P9) and (F3P51), as well as a white cross (F1P57) with floral characteristics in the bouquet of wine made from it.

Casetta has undergone quarantine and testing at the Foundation Plant Services (FPS) center at UC Davis in California and 20 of these vines were released to us in August of 2014. They are currently at the Rutgers Agricultural Research and Extension Center in Centerton, New Jersey and will be released for growth and evaluation in the spring of 2015. The three crosses remain in quarantine.

We have obtained a trademark for one of the three crosses- the white variety “**Sant’Irene**”. We will need to establish commercial use in order to fulfill the trademark requirements. We will file for a trademark extension so that we can establish a Statement of Use in Commerce. We expect to be able to do this in June of 2015 when we anticipate its release to us from FPS. We did initial searches for names that we wanted to establish for the two red crosses- “**San Marco**” for F1 P9 and “**San Lorenzo**” for F3P51, however these searches indicated potential use of these names in wine related matters. Given that we do not expect to receive these vines from FPS until 2016, we decided not to continue to pursue a trade name for these two varieties at this time but likely will do so in the future.

In November of 2013 we conducted a successful symposium entitled “**Grapes of Delight**” which included a presentation by Dr Marco Stefanini of the growth characteristics and wine making potential of Casetta and the three crosses that we imported. In attendance were over 50 grape growers, wine makers and wine experts.

We have the ability to legally propagate Casetta and use it as we see appropriate. Our organization and FEM decided that a materials transfer agreement was not necessary for the importation and use of the three new crosses developed at FEM. We await the patenting of the three crosses by FEM but in the interim we will continue our evaluation and testing of these varieties after they are released from quarantine.

#### **Lagrein and Teroldego Evaluation-**

Evaluation of the growth and productivity of Teroldego and Lagrein at each vineyard was carried out but evaluation was limited due to vine injury by the cold temperatures during the winter dormancy of 2013-2014. That winter produced nearly 50% death due to cold temperatures in January 2014 (0 to -10F) at the participating vineyards. This record cold winter provided some useful information regarding the cold injury susceptibility of these varieties. However, the resulting vine mortality has also hampered our ability to measure growth characteristics and has necessitated the purchase of additional Teroldego and Lagrein for planting in the spring of 2015.

Comparing the accomplishments in the evaluation of Teroldgo, Lagrein and the imported varieties with the goals established for this grant for this period we have been successful in all except for the evaluation of some of the growth characteristics of Teroldego and Lagrein. This was due to the unavailability of these vines for planting in the first season and the mortality of some of these vines due to winter injury. Both events were not under our control.

## **BENEFICIARIES:**

### **Of the blend-**

Producing a proprietary wine blend has helped make an immediate impact on the viticultural success of the **OCP AVA** (2.2 million acres) by allowing **NJ wineries** (over 50) to simultaneously make and market a product that has promoted the uniqueness of the area. There are over **40 grape growers** and over 20 wineries in our AVA alone that can benefit from the conception and production of the blend. As stated previously there are 11 wineries that have committed to the production of this blend. Initially **Coeur d'Est** has been made in limited quantities, typically 50- 200 gallons (one to four barrels) per participating winery and has not been sold at festivals but rather at the winery only. As these 11 wineries increase production and all 26 wineries begin production of this wine it will undoubtedly be available at NJ festivals.

**The consumer** response to the new blend has been very positive, as has the opinion of **wine experts**. Of the eight wineries that have already produced the blend all have sold it for over \$20 a bottle and most have sold out of their first year production. Recognition of the five varieties chosen for the blend by wineries and grape growers has led to great interest in the production of these varieties.

### **Of the Italian varieties-**

We have successfully imported four unique varieties that have great potential for growing and producing high quality grapes and wine for our region. Our successful symposium regarding these varieties exposed over 50 **growers, wine makers and wine experts** from our region and elsewhere to the potential of these varieties. While the consumer has yet to benefit from these varieties, we have established the techniques for growing and evaluating these varieties in our region. This effort has also increased our visibility as a growing region among viticulture experts from a variety of States as well as from Italy.

## **LESSONS LEARNED:**

1. A quality wine can be designed “by committee” if it uses sound information regarding the grape varieties that can be grown well in the region and takes into account the incentives of grower, producer and consumer in the production of that blend. This was no easy task but we were highly successful in the naming of the blend, as well as helpful to the wineries in the growing, production and marketing of **Coeur d'Est**.
2. Wine experts agree that a wine blend containing these varieties, one of which is novel to **proprietary blends (Chambourcin), can be made which is of high quality**.
3. We found that even in a poor growing season, like 2011, a high quality wine can be made from this blend. This is extremely important because the consumer wants a blend to be consistently good from vintage to vintage.
4. The process of trademarking a name can be lengthy and expensive but is likely to greatly help in developing an identity for our region.
5. The varieties of Teroldego and Lagrein have some degree of cold susceptibility as winter injury was seen at temperatures of zero to -10 degrees Fahrenheit. Dr Stefanini indicates that Casetta and the imported crosses are likely to be less susceptible to cold injury but

6. The process of quarantine, disease testing and disease elimination requires considerable time but is an essential step in the propagation of healthy plant material.

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:**

**Regarding the blend Coeur d'Est:**

Websites

[www.outercoastalplain.com](http://www.outercoastalplain.com)- For special articles regarding the naming of the new wine blend and its release as well as minutes of meetings of the OCPVA in which this project was discussed

[www.coeurdest.com](http://www.coeurdest.com)- For an introduction to Coeur d'Est

[www.jerseybites.com](http://www.jerseybites.com)- For an independent publication regarding the launch of the new wine blend

**Regarding the Italian Varieties-**

Publications (see appendices)

- 1) Planting and Care of Teroldego and Lagrein
- 2) Publication of the background information of Teroldego and Lagrein for growers
- 3) Brochure for Grapes of Delight Symposium

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## **SCBG Agreement # 12-25-B-1243**

### **Rutgers, The State University, New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station**

Final Performance Report

December 29, 2014

*(Revised 4/1/2015)*

#### **Project Title: “Locally Grown Public Service Announcements**

##### **Project Summary:**

This project prepared a series of Public Service Announcements (PSAs) on agricultural promotion of specialty crops. Videos produced ranged from 30-60 seconds on various commodities and production practices for both adult and youth audiences. With increased interest in specialty crops, the short video clips provided will help to promote and market them as well as direct them to a website for more information. These video products fill an existing gap in educating the public regarding specialty crops by offering the viewing public an easily accessed, entertaining, and effortless method of learning.

Rutgers Cooperative Extension of Middlesex County was best suited to produce and distribute these educational videos due to a decade of experience with the Public Television series, “IF PLANTS COULD TALK”, and video “products” in cooperation with the USDA Northeastern Forest Service that include “Wanted: Asian Longhorned Beetle and “Sudden Oak Death (Phytophthora ramorum)” CD/DVD sets. These PSAs will reach county and statewide media markets through distribution on the Telvue Shared Video Server network (offering content to Cable Access Stations via download), agricultural websites, and posting on YouTube.

##### **Project Approach:**

- The eight PSA’s were completed and ready for distribution for television and internet
- Distribution outlets for the PSA’s have been contacted.
- 3 Videos Uploaded, 2 version of each to Televue Connect Video server for distribution to JAG Stations (Consortium of Cable Access stations throughout NJ)
- 3 Videos Uploaded, 2 versions of each to YouTube channel NJ Special Crops  
Located at <http://www.youtube.com/channel/UCZIOOgcS-vqW9vfw51Fs0jg>
- The completed PSA’s will air on cable and public television stations and will be shown throughout the state. Videos link to key websites to promote specialty crops throughout the state including Farm Bureau, Visit NJ Farms websites as well as many Agricultural organizations and cooperators throughout the state.
- Complete web work on the visitnjfarms.org website to track visitors via visits to web site
- Track effectiveness of PSA’s by visits to the VisitNJFarms.org website that is currently being revised for social media and video content.

### **Goals and Outcomes Achieved:**

Visits to [vistinjfarms.org](http://vistinjfarms.org) were tripled directly after airing the video segments this past growing season.

Television and internet videos can now direct customers to our direct marketing website throughout the growing season. Since the completion of PSAs and use on websites, there has been significant increase in website visitations to our [visitnjfarms.org](http://visitnjfarms.org) website. In 2014 Page views increased to 98,450 from the previous 33,400 in 2013.

The videos will now be used year after year to increase awareness of specialty crops throughout the state and increase visits to [visitnjfarms.org](http://visitnjfarms.org) web site as well as an increase in profits and visits to growers of specialty crops.

We originally wanted to utilize discount coupons to track cause and effect but we were not able to get agreement among growers as to the exact amount of discount that would be honored statewide. See under Lessons Learned.

Overall the project was very successful. Here is a quote from current president of the NJ Farmers Direct Marketing Association: “Middlesex County Extension put out fantastic public access videos that is drawing attention to local farms buying local and supporting local farms to promote and support local farms. Through all the viewership of the great videos is getting a lot of New Jersey clientele to the new [visitnjfarms.org](http://visitnjfarms.org) website and directing them to the local farms and pick-your-own opportunities.”

### **Beneficiaries:**

It is anticipated that promotion of specialty crops will influence the general public consumption and improve healthy eating habits. This project will lead to an increase demand by individual consumers, schools, and public eating establishments. The PSAs and internet video clips have a potential audience of 8.8 million people in New Jersey. The largest increases in population have been the Hispanic or Latino (30%) group followed by African-Americans and Asians creating a more diverse state.

Marketing and promotion of specialty crops addresses the needs of the growing ethnic populations and improves the bottom line for the agricultural producer. New Jersey currently has over a billion dollar agricultural industry and promotion of specialty crops will create new opportunities to improve farmer income.

### **Lessons Learned:**

It is a challenge to measure the direct impact of televised segments. We can indirectly measure impact by looking at the increase in visitations to the [visitnjfarms.org](http://visitnjfarms.org) web site. There was over a 300% increase in visits to the web site which we can confidently attribute to the videos we created for local specialty crops. The increase in visitations was noted directly after release of videos.

It has been very difficult to get feedback from web surveys. However, we've had significant increases in visits to njfarms.org website immediately following release of our videos on specialty crops.

We learned that distribution to regional cable access stations and our affiliation with them helped expand our audience and interest in specialty crops. By developing a relationship with a local cable access group we were able to distribute our products throughout New Jersey, a much larger area than expected.

We were forced to drop the idea of discount coupons as a method of enticing customers to visit farms and help us track impact. We could not reach consensus as to the level of discount to be honored from coupons. Because we could not reach a consensus on level of discount among many New Jersey growers, through the New Jersey Direct Marketing Association. We will continue to work with growers to determine better methods of tracking the impact of our video segments and the enhanced web site presence.

The changing seasons will always present a challenge to providing timely commodity specific information to consumers at the right times when only those commodities are available.

Despite all the obstacles, we were able to produce concise and informative videos that led to significant visits to our visitnjfarms.org web site to lead people to direct markets throughout the state that sell a great variety of specialty crops. We expect the farmers in the upcoming growing season to report back they are receiving more inquiries.

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## **SCBG Agreement #12-25-B-1243**

Garden State Wine Growers Association

Final Performance Report **REVISED**

Submitted March 19, 2015

### **Project Title: “Promotion of a State Brand for NJ Wines”**

#### **Project Summary**

This project sought to assist with the design and execution of a much-needed overall branding/marketing campaign for the NJ Wine Industry. The focus of the project was the development of a full branding & marketing plan that created awareness and further defined the NJ Wine Industry. A key element of this process was the development of a contemporary logo and tagline. Multi-functional logos were designed and implemented, which now allow the current NJ Wine Industry to convey a strong message and consistently apply their visual image to numerous mediums. A strong branding campaign followed, promoting the new image of the NJ Wine Industry, which entailed strategically placed statewide advertising that promoted the NJ Wine Industry through many forms of media (print, radio, internet, etc.). In addition, a cohesive plan of collateral materials, which market the new logo and tagline, were successfully undertaken as well.

#### **Project Approach**

The approach of the project was to develop a multi-faceted branding & awareness campaign that took the NJ Wine Industry to a whole new level of sophistication. Developing a comprehensive branding and marketing campaign would affect the knowledge, awareness and identification of the NJ Wine Industry and certainly increase the number of consumers. Thus this would translate positively for NJ wines and wineries. The project was very strategic in its approach. There were four key focuses: image development, branding awareness, collateral development and Internet presence. The common thread of the project was to bring consistency to the marketing and branding of the NJ Wine Industry.

#### **Logo & Tagline Design**

The GSWGGA developed three logos through this project. Visually the three logos carry similar elements, colors and style. These consistencies tie them together and unify them for branding and awareness purposes. A logo was created for each of the following: NJ Wine Industry, GSWGGA and NJ Wine Trails. The GSWGGA is very pleased with the logos in that they are contemporary, eye catching and translate well to many media forms. There is no doubt that they convey the image that the GSWGGA seeks to project now and into the future. The tag line developed for the NJ Wine Industry (*Toast the Garden State*) and the tagline for the NJ Wine Trails (*Discover the Garden State. One Taste at a Time*) are simple yet inviting. The new logos and taglines now appear everywhere and anywhere the NJ Wine industry, GSWGGA or NJ Wine Trails is seen (print, web site, marketing materials, digital, collateral materials and the like).

#### **Statewide Branding/Advertising**

The GSWGGA was extremely pleased with the statewide branding and advertising campaign designed to create awareness of the new logos and taglines. With support from the SCBG the GSWGGA was able to utilize significant dollars for a total statewide, multi-faceted campaign solely for the promotion of the NJ Wine Industry. The GSWGGA carried the advertising and marketing campaign to traditional media outlets, but were also able for the first time to place a highly visible, full page ad in the NJ Travel Guide with a circulation of more than 400,000 copies (shelf life of the publication is one year). The response to the campaign was very positive! Wineries and patrons alike reported great feedback on the images and the message that they convey about the NJ Wine Industry. The new logos and taglines were noticed, and the cohesion of the branding message across all three entities was very apparent to all.

### Website Redesign

Through the support of this SCBG the GSWGA was able to mount a complete redesign of the GSWGA web site (newjerseywines.com). The web site is a total change from the prior site in look, feel, navigation and information. The new web site proudly features the new logo and tagline of the GSWGA, while paying tribute to the NJ Wine Industry as a whole. It is very consumer friendly in its usability, reliability and timeliness of information. Traffic flow through the new site has been very good since its launch in July 2014. Wineries have been very favorable and satisfied with the functionality of the new web site as well.

### Collateral Materials/POS Pieces

The GSWGA did develop and produce a number of collateral materials in support of the new branding and web site. These pieces included a rack card, POS pieces and in winery signage. Postcards were also developed and distributed for all major events, which always carried the new logo and web site information. Through support of the grant, the GSWGA was able to design and produce a comprehensive brochure about the NJ Wine Industry. This valuable marketing & branding tool accomplishes many goals. The brochure proudly features the new NJ Wine Industry logo & tagline, promotes the fully redesigned web site and offers a comprehensive guide to NJ wineries throughout the state. The brochure was distributed statewide via a combination of distribution sources, mailings and handouts at wineries and industry events. Both the wineries and consumers report very positively on this significant marketing & branding tool.

### **Goals and Outcomes Achieved**

In all ways this project was a complete success. The goal of developing a complete branding and marketing campaign that elevated the awareness of New Jersey wines was achieved. Wine consumers throughout New Jersey have embraced taking the brand to a much higher level of sophistication. The cohesive and unified logo designs, the complete web site redesign, statewide marketing campaign and comprehensive collateral materials provide a unified brand for New Jersey's wines and wineries. The success of the program has been affirmed by the steady increase of visitations to the newly designed web site and a strong uptick in the number of pages viewed each time a consumer enters the web site. As part of the project the GSWGA offered a brief exit survey (over the period of 12 months) to visitors of the web site. The exit survey gathered information on: the consumers overall satisfaction with the information provided on the site, the level of "user friendliness" of the site and how the consumer learned about the web site. The on-going review of the survey results showed the GSWGA that the newly designed site was a positive change for the NJ Wine Industry. The results did assist the GSWGA in making an adjustment to the presentation of the Wine Trail information to make it clearer and more "consumer friendly". The brief exit survey also affirmed that awareness of the NJ Wine Industry was steadily increasing, but also assisted the GSWGA in expanding their marketing efforts to include even more digital placement and transit ads (both of which are now important parts of the 2015 marketing plan for the NJ Wine industry). In addition, the goal of branding and marketing the NJ Wine industry statewide, thus creating a much higher awareness of the industry, has been achieved by the placement of a extremely visual ad in the NJ Tourism Guide with a circulation which exceeds 400,000 copies annually. Production of a full color, comprehensive brochure about the NJ Wine Industry that saw multi-level distribution of the piece in excess of 60,000 copies provided a most valuable marketing tool. As a means to gather important information from the wineries in regards to the overall impact of this project, the GSWGA held two round table discussions during the year. The meetings took place 6 months apart and were led by the GSWGA Marketing Committee. Prior to the beginning of the discussions each winery was given a brief survey to complete. The wineries rated: their satisfaction with the POS pieces for tasting rooms & retail outlets, their impression of the impact various collateral materials/marketing tools provided to the public had made on their winery visitation & wine sales, their overall satisfaction with the new NJ Wine Industry branding campaign as it related to their own winery. Both meetings culminated in an open round table discussion about the subject matter. During the first meeting much of the discussion centered around idea sharing between wineries and ways in to adjust the plans to make them even more effective. The second meeting focused significantly on the overall satisfaction with the project and discussion about whether the impact of the program was felt statewide or more regionally based. Results from the discussions and brief surveys showed that the program was an overwhelming success across the entire industry. Perhaps the most important outcome of this project has been that with a focus being placed on creating brand awareness numerous NJ wineries have had the necessary support to produce and sell a growing line of NJ wines into the marketplace. This has elevated the profile of NJ wines in the overall wine industry.

### **Beneficiaries**

With nearly 50 operating wineries, New Jersey remains the fifth largest wine producing state in the U.S. Certainly these members, and those who have joined since the grant was initiated, have benefited greatly from the increased support and awareness.

### **Lessons Learned**

It is evident by the response to the unified branding and awareness campaign that wine consumers in New Jersey are beginning to view the winery offerings from the Garden State at a whole new level of sophistication. Awareness of the NJ Wine Industry is on a continued increase and the response is positive. Building an entire branding & marketing campaign, starting with identifiable logos that unite the NJ Wine Industry and its premier organization, helped launch an awareness of the depth of wines found in New Jersey. Providing wine consumers, both new and old, with a multiple of resources to learn about the outstanding wines of New Jersey and the distinctions that come with each in our state raised the respect of NJ wines even further. A complete marketing and branding campaign, along with statewide distribution of a significant marketing tool, has been instrumental in giving many members of the GSWGA the opportunity to showcase their individual wines. The critical lesson learned is that a complete marketing/branding campaign can successfully translate to new levels of awareness, can educate a wine consumer to appreciate and purchase NJ wines and does motivate wineries to deepen their wine products to meet the growing demand by consumers.

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## **SCBG Agreement # 12-25-B-1243**

### **Landisville Cooperative Association**

Final Performance Report

December 31, 2014

#### **Project Title:**

“Development of a Web-based Promotional and Sales System Coupled with Advertising to Enhance the Competitive Position of the Landisville Produce Cooperative in the Regional Food System.”

#### **Project Summary:**

The Landisville Cooperative Association Inc, a.k.a. Landisville Produce Cooperative (LPC), is the oldest farmer-owned produce marketing cooperative in the United States. The LPC sells fresh vegetables grown by its 150 New Jersey members, and provides cooling and storage, packing ice, and bulk purchases of supplies. This project sought to increase the sales of the members’ produce through an on-site direct-to-consumer and business-to-business market enterprise by using SCBG funds to initiate a web-based sales and promotional site coupled with advertising to bring business to the site over a two-year period. Additional sales will increase the income and viability of the LPC and its farmer members. Income generated by this enterprise will be distributed to individual members based on sales of produce to supply the market as well as distribution of net revenue prorated on the volume of business done with the Co-op.

#### **Project Approach:**

The cooperative retained the services of a web design company to create a web-based marketing program to allow constant and immediate communication about the status of local crops to its customer base.

In February of 2012 The Co-op began inquiring with several media outlets for the advertising of locally grown fruits and vegetables from its members: Radio – “Ed Hitzels” radio show highlighting local produce featured at area restaurants. Newspapers – Vineland Daily Journal for a weekly section on the current availability of local fruits and vegetables. Point of sale signs located at key high traffic areas in the Cumberland and Atlantic counties featuring available “high volume” local produce items.

In March 2012 thru September 2012 the Co-op advertised local produce in several free newspapers, including ones from Cape May, Atlantic and Cumberland counties. As of November 2012 the web page has not reached completed development, but input from the community on the advertising of local product also met with positive feedback.

#### **Goals and Outcomes Achieved:**

The Landisville Cooperative Auction increased sales by an additional 5,000 to 25,000 packages with an expected increase of \$1.00 per package to be documented by the end of the marketing season by December 31, 2014.

Immediate results of increased sales of produce, due to the easy ordering procedures available on the web page provided a hopeful outlook for the co-op. The expected measurable outcome for this project will be in continued increases in visibility for the co-op in the local community as well as nationwide wholesale consumers, the web designers will have the web site placed in a strong search engine making it easy for consumers to navigate to our page and purchase local product. IN 2015 sales for the co-op and its grower members of local produce due to the web site implementation are expected to increase by at least 1000 packages during a complete growing season. This increase is calculated by quantitatively adjusting the amount of new purchases of approximately 40 packages per week for a 24 week growing period.

The Cooperative will be registering its domain name and be providing the web based marketing system with hosting support including regular maintenance and updates according to the new updated time line.

The collection and tracking of data for this project will be the measurement of its performance on the regular and ongoing accounting and direct monitoring by the Landisville Co-op manager of the sales generated by online orders by customers.

As of July 15, 2014 the Domain Name was registered. Web page design and web based marketing with hosting support has been completed with including regular maintenance and updates scheduled.

### **Beneficiaries:**

- The Landisville Produce Cooperative and its 150 farmer members have realize increased revenues by additional sales to the co-op and by selling their fresh produce at retail prices rather than wholesale.
- Residents of southern New Jersey are benefiting from greater access to high quality, farm fresh produce through direct purchases or through local restaurants.
- By enhancing the previously SCBG-funded market project, this online marketing effort created new jobs at the LPC.

### **Lessons Learned:**

Some difficulty was encountered with the original web based design which slowed progress as a new team was sought to provide the required services. Some of the necessary assistance was provided by outside specialists with those costs paid for by the cooperative and with the help of in-house staff working overtime. Some of the problems encountered could have been avoided if the original plan had taken the time to establish specific goals and timelines to be followed. Any future projects of this nature should consider what is possible and realistic to achieve from the outset.

In many growing areas surrounded by development opportunities exist to sell directly to consumers or suppliers who are close to their end users like foodservice suppliers. But many growers do not have the resources to enable them to capture the retail buying power of the often affluent customers surrounding them. Participation in a cooperative that has that ability to make those kinds of sales is a good way to diversify the demand for your product without making costly changes to your business model.

**Contact Person;**

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## **SCBG Agreement # 12-25-B-1243**

### **New Jersey Peach Promotion Council**

Final Report

April 11, 2013

### **Project Title: “Promote and Handle Jersey Fresh Peaches”**

#### **Project Summary**

This project was focused on garnering more profitable sales for New Jersey peach growers and shippers by promoting the advantages of the New Jersey peach crop through contact with consumers and retail buyers. This grant’s funding of \$18,600 allowed the New Jersey Peach Promotion Council (NJPPC) to continue building on its aggressive marketing/advertising/promotional efforts, begun with a specialty crop block grant in 2010, for the purpose of not only increasing public and industry awareness of our locally grown peaches and nectarines, but also to drive sales. NJPPC was able to utilize grant funding as a basis to build an aggressive public outreach program that is increasingly successful in reaching these goals.

Accomplishments under the grant for the 2012 season:

Social media/website revised (including Facebook)

Ad schedule and placement in two trade publications that go to wholesalers, retailers and other entities involved in the produce industry.

Visits to four supermarkets in south, central and north New Jersey.

Press releases announced peach blossom 'trail,' in April, availability of peaches, calendars of special peach events, appearances of peach queens at selected events, restaurant promotions, other promotional news as it arises.

An increase of NJPPC special promotion and marketing event participation. These events are increasingly popular with farmers markets and restaurants, as increase in customers is very tangible.

#### **Project Approach**

The NJPPC retained services of a consultant at an hourly rate to implement the plan outlined in the grant proposal, with payment not to exceed allocations of the grant. Among projects implemented were total revision of the website working with the NJPPC web provider; placement of ads in trade print media; increasing NJPPC presence with supermarkets and other retail outlets; developing and implementing special “Peach Events” and obtaining media coverage of those.

## Goals & Outcomes Achieved, Year 2012

Funded activities for 2012 were completed, with the exception of retail promotions. Supermarket display contest will be revised for 2013. Other retail/supermarket promotions are being explored for viability.

### 2012: Website/Social Media

Website hits increased by 15,274 more than 2011; increase in hits was 154,757 more than 2011. We attribute this increase to the total revision accomplished for the 2012 season.

### NJPPC website Traffic: 2012 compared to 2011

<u>2012</u> <u>Month</u>	<u>Page</u> <u>Views</u>	<u>Visits</u>	<u>Hits</u>		<u>2011</u> <u>Month</u>	<u>Page</u> <u>Views</u>	<u>Visits</u>	<u>Hits</u>
July, 2012	8,616	8,411	102,291		July, 2011	0	0	0
August, 2012	7,509	8,033	81,398		August, 2011	1,407	1,509	16,742
September, 2012	5,508	6,146	24,542		September, 2011	4,959	5,364	32,473
October, 2012	5,370	5,559	14,317		October, 2011	5,363	4,941	18,576
Total(s)	27,003	28,149	222,548		Total(s)	11,729	11,814	67,791
Average(s)	6,750	7,037	55,637		Average(s)	2,932	2,953	16,947

**2012:** Facebook visits: approximately 11,000, compared to 4,000 in 2011.

### Advertising – Trade

**2012 Trade Advertising:** Two trade publications, Produce News & Produce Business, carried ads.

### 2012 Retail Promotions

Four visits were made to the buyer's officers of major supermarket chains to build produce directors/buyers' awareness of when Jersey peaches become available and reinforce importance of retailing and promoting Jersey-grown peaches. The NJPPC assisted and supported retail farmers markets with point-of-sale printed collateral that included banners, recipe booklets and brochures.

Retail supermarket were supported with visits by Peach Queen, brochures and recipe booklets for one-day events. One supermarket produce buyer reported that support of the NJPPC and his special peach promotions were a factor in his increased sales.

To outreach to the retail supermarket industry the NJPPC provided a presentation to the 200 industry wholesale and retailers in attendance representing the North Jersey and New York City metro area at the annual Eastern Produce Council dinner. The topic of the presentation was an advance peach crop report of the anticipated Jersey Fresh peach season.

Point of sale advertising materials were developed and distributed to retailers of New Jersey peaches. The advertising materials were developed so that consumers would be able to see and identify the same point of sale advertising at farm markets, community farmers markets and right on the shelves of major retailers.

The NJPPC estimates that the point of sale advertising materials was distributed to 40 markets. The distributed materials included more than 4,600 price cards, peach trifold brochures, peach recipe booklets, a nectarine fact sheet, variety fact sheets, peach buyers guides and posters.

Due to the proprietary nature of retail supermarket industry sales data the NJPPC does not have quantitative data for retail sales data from year to year. The demand for NJ peaches was strong and the product moved well. For examples the NPPPC facilitated the sale of 26 trailer loads of peaches to southwest Michigan. These sales were made to buyers new to the Jersey peach deal. The new suppliers sold to both farm markets and retail supermarkets.

#### Press Releases

Press releases (with media outreach) resulted in 53 editorial mentions and/or features reaching a total estimated readership/viewership in excess of 4,569,459. The total estimated readership/viewership for the 2011 program is not currently available.

Some TV, newspaper circulation figures unavailable, hence not included in total. Complete listing of editorial coverage in accompanying document. The NJPPC can only measure results of these by surveying growers on traffic increases following such mentions. Growers offering peaches during our "Peach Party" events report that their sales were so good on those days, they sometimes had to put on additional help. (Reference: Collingswood, Chatham markets) Within the scope of this grant the NJPPC is not currently planning on surveying the growers to determine traffic increases. The NJPPC is hopeful that such a survey could be accomplished in a future Specialty Crop Block Grant.

#### Special Promotions

Thirty-one "Peach Party" and special events were held at farmers markets, restaurants and farms, compared to eight such events in 2009, the first year of these promotions. Events included special peach pricing, peach tastings, peach pie contests, peach queen appearances, drawings for baskets of peaches, kid's activities. Success of these in drawing additional customers for those days was measured by market managers and grower purveyors reporting that attendance swelled on those days. One grower told the consultant that if it had not been for initiating these peach events, he would have been out of business. As result of the events and pre-event promotional notices, he has to staff extra help to handle the demand for peaches. Attendance at the peach parties averaged about 500 people making for a total of about 15,500 at the thirty-one peach promotion parties.

The growers and supermarkets surveyed indicated that the "Peach Parties" indeed increased their sales, requiring them to put on extra help for those special days. One grower said that if it were not for these events, he would probably be out of the peach growing business.

Twelve Hundred Wholesale Peach Buyers Guides were distributed in 2012 as compared to just 850 in 2011.

The information and inquiries generated from the Wholesale Buyers Guide is put on the NJPPC web site which was greatly expanded in 2012.

Fewer retail trade promotions were conducted in 2012 due to a decrease in funding and also a higher demand for the product which made the retail trade promotions less important as a tool needed to drive demand.

As previously mentioned this project made great strides in working with the restaurant industry and in community farmers markets. In the future the NJPPC needs to quantify peach movement in these channels. The success in Michigan was a particular highlight of this program.

**Beneficiaries** NJPPC increased public awareness of New Jersey peaches. Growers reported they had the best season in several year and they were planning to plant new trees, in some cases, even new orchards. Peach grower participants in one-day peach events at farmers markets reported that on those days they had to staff additional help to fill public demand for peaches. Supermarket produce buyer awareness has been heightened through personal visits.

**Lessons Learned** NJPPC's public outreach, assisted by the Specialty Crop Block Grant, are increasingly successfully in positioning Jersey-grown peaches as the "best," and building consumer demand for our fruit.

It is clear that continual marketing and promotional efforts will continue to build consumer demand. Efforts by the PPC must be two-pronged: one directed to peach growers, processors and retail outlets to provide the peaches to meet demand; the other directed to consumers to demand Jersey-grown peaches.

**Contact Persons**

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## **SCBG Agreement # 12-25-B-1243**

### **New Jersey Farm Bureau (NJFB)**

Final Performance Report

December 29, 2014

REVISED: March 18, 2015

#### **Project Title:**

“Food Safety: Preparing New Jersey Growers to Meet Future Requirements.”

#### **Project Summary:**

This proposal came in response to increased food safety protocols for many of New Jersey’s specialty crop producers. In order to remain competitive, these producers must adhere to strict food safety requirements to appease both buyers and consumers. With this in mind, we proposed to make food safety training information more accessible to producers by creating a distribution list of producers interested in food safety issues and establishing a web-based outlet for pertinent for safety information. Additionally, we proposed to arrange a food safety summit featuring recognized experts in the field for impacted growers. These two activities enabled us to increase grower competitiveness by enabling producers to be responsive to emergent food safety requirements.

#### **Project Approach:**

This effort intended to make New Jersey’s specialty crop producers more competitive by streamlining the flow of pertinent food safety-related information to growers.

Whether dealing with the food safety requirements of buyers, increased consumer awareness of food safety issues or complying with new food safety regulations, growers are tasked with a series of challenges to remain competitive in today’s fresh produce market. In light of these pressures and new demands on the state’s agricultural producers, the timeliness of this project proposal is evident.

- A food safety resource delivery network was established. To effectuate this goal, a web-based hub of food safety information that serves as a resource for farmers looking for updated information on the latest federal food safety regulations, information about produce recalls and pertinent resources on this subject produced by reliable sources such as Rutgers’ New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station (NJAES) was established. Additionally, a network of growers interested in receiving information and updates on food safety-related issues was established. That list enabled us to quickly and efficiently disseminate pertinent food safety information to impacted growers.
- A summit was hosted with recognized food safety experts for New Jersey fruit and vegetable producers. The summit, held at a central location in the state, enabled the state’s fruit and vegetable producers to hear directly from specialists with expertise on food safety issues. NJFB’s role was to organize the summit, secure the speakers and venue as well as using our database of farmers to advertise the event. By bringing this

information directly to the growers, we enabled them to increase their competitiveness by becoming more proactive in their handling of existing and forthcoming food safety requirements.

### **Goals and Outcomes Achieved:**

Attendees of the October forum provided us with detailed contact information. The goal was to “Establish a food safety resource delivery network.” To effectuate this goal, a web-based hub of food safety information that serves as a resource for farmers looking for updated information on the latest federal food safety regulations, information about produce recalls and pertinent resources on this subject produced by reliable sources such as Rutgers’ New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station (NJAES) was established. Additionally, we’ll establish a network of growers interested in receiving information and updates on food safety-related issues. This list will enable us to quickly and efficiently disseminate pertinent food safety information to impacted growers.”

The web-based content on the proposed regulations is housed on our organization's website ([www.njfb.org](http://www.njfb.org)) under in the "information for farmers" tab. Here, we've already begun compiling critical information about the draft regulations, working in close coordination with food safety experts from Rutgers' NJ Agricultural Experiment Station (NJAES). Housing this information on our primary website was done intentionally in the interim to allow for more frequent updates and to deliver this information to grower-members who already rely on our website for farm-related news and information. Going forward, we intend to create a standalone website with more extensive information about the proposed draft regulations and other food safety-related items.

The session was resoundingly successful, drawing more than seventy farmers from throughout the state. At the session, attendees heard from expert speakers from the Food and Drug Administration, Rutgers University's Agricultural Experiment Station and the North Carolina Department of Agriculture. Each speaker offered insights on the proposed draft regulations, and called attention to the aspects of the proposed regulations that could have the most significant impact on New Jersey specialty crop producers.

Attendees not only learned about the specific provisions in the proposed regulations, but were also advised to provide formal written comments to FDA to ensure sufficient input from farmer-stakeholders.

Due to A/V challenges on the day of the event, the recording was unsuccessful. However, we were able to cross-reference other vital video content for the website, using publicly available media from FDA and extension. Additionally, with other food safety-related events on the horizon, there will be future opportunities to capture worthwhile video content to be included on the new food safety information clearinghouse website.

### **Beneficiaries:**

Work was also done to establish the contact list of growers interested in receiving updates about the proposed new food safety rules. Attendees to the October seminar provided us with their contact information, and will receive future updates from NJFB with information about the proposed regulations and other food safety-related issues that emerge. Additionally, as we prepare the standalone website, we'll send out additional information to our members, alerting them about this site and recommending that they provide us with their electronic contact information in order to receive future updates on food safety.

In total, there were sixty-one participants at the October, 2013 seminar. These same individuals are now part of the list-serve of farmers who will continue to receive updates on this topic going forward. Additionally, all other members of New Jersey Farm Bureau (11,000+ total membership) have been invited to add their names to this list serve, so we anticipate an even larger beneficiary pool going forward. The website, which will continue to be updated with useful content for the next two years, will also reach a large beneficiary pool. All of the specialty crop producers who utilize these services will hopefully be better-positioned to respond to the new food safety regulations once they are finalized by FDA, something that will make their operations more efficient and profitable.

### **Lessons Learned:**

The grant proposal also initially called for surveys administered to attendees to serve as a PERFORMANCE MEASURE. The intent of the surveys was to gauge whether or not attendees' knowledge of food safety issues increased by at least 25% (TARGET) from the original baseline (BENCHMARK) as a result of the summit. We opted against the issuance of surveys because the proposed new regulations were pending at the time of the seminar. We had anticipated that the proposed regulations would be finalized, and that the surveys would provide a useful tool to measure grower awareness of the new food safety regulations pre- and post- attending. Without finalized regulations in place, such a survey seemed premature.

After some reconsideration, we did decide to send out surveys to participating growers to assess their awareness of the new proposed food safety regulations following the October, 2013 seminar. While survey response rate were underwhelming, the contact list of affected growers nevertheless helped us to use other strategies to evaluate the success of the grant program. For instance, the contact list has been used repeatedly in the preceding months to alert interested growers about updates in the status of the proposed new food safety rules from FDA, the availability of resources on the food safety website and other upcoming outreach seminars on the Food Safety Modernization Act. What's more, members of the list-serve have expressed a strong desire for future training seminars once the regulations – unexpectedly delayed during the grant term – finally come to fruition. This after-the-fact feedback illustrates to us that there is strong continued interest within New Jersey's specialty crop about this topic, and that the groundwork laid as part of this grant will enable us to continue delivering critically important information to the grower community served by the October, 2013 event.

Even though the grant term has passed, we will nevertheless continue to use the framework that was created (list-serve; website; etc) as the basis for our continued education and outreach efforts with the specialty crop producer community. As such, benchmarking will continue in earnest, as we seek to ensure maximal farmer preparedness for the eventual release of the rules. We'll continue to evaluate our success in delivery useful information to the farm community on this topic by keeping in contact with growers who have expressed an interest in future updates, monitoring visitors to the food safety website, and potentially hosting another informational seminar once the rules are finalized.

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## **SCBG Agreement # 12-25-B-1243**

### **New Jersey Agricultural Society**

Final Performance Report

December 29, 2014

### **Project Title:**

“Agricultural Leadership Development Program”

### **Project Summary:**

The New Jersey Agricultural Leadership Development sought to provide training for specialty crop producers so they can more efficiently produce and market their products and also be effective spokespersons for their industry. This project sought to provide partial funding of staff to organize the program and conduct training for specialty crop producers. The specialty crop producers enrolled in this program paid all of their own expenses? and also making a large commitment in their own time to participate in this program without compensation.

### **Project Approach:**

Specific areas of business skills development of benefit to specialty crop producers were identified by the managers and trainers of the NJALDP and a venue and agenda was established and presenters and trainers scheduled. The ~~one-day~~ two-day training seminars were promoted to specialty crop producers in advance and the education and training was conducted before September 30 2014.

### **Significant Results:**

#### **Seminars**

January 17, 2013 (Kick-Off Ceremony)

February 12-13, 2013 (Leadership and Team Building)

April 17 – 18, 2013 (Marketing/Philadelphia Wholesale Produce Market)

June 19 – 20, 2013 – (Legislative Leadership) – not covered by grant funding

September 12, 2013 – Field Trip – Duke Farms – Organic Vegetable Production

October 30 – 31, 2013 – (Cranberry and Blueberry Industry)

January 15-16, 2014 – (Public Speaking/Media Communications)

February 4 – 6, 2014 – New Jersey Vegetable Growers Convention/State Ag Convention

April 23 – 24, 2014 – Vegetable and Greenhouse Industries, Leadership Styles

The first workshop was held on February 12th and 13th of 2013. The program has been designed to assist the participants in developing different types of marketing for their products; wholesale, retail and community supported agriculture.

The second workshop scheduled for April 17th and 18th, the participants visited Philadelphia Wholesale Produce Market and Reading Terminal to cover marketing strategies for fruit and vegetable growers. They were assigned to developing a marketing plan that will be reviewed at this workshop. Also in this workshop they will be developing the public speaking skills with a set of exercise designed for them to interact at the Philadelphia Wholesale Market and Reading Terminal to increase their knowledge of marketing and advocacy for the agricultural industry.

The third workshop was on the topic of Legislative Leadership. Funds were not used from this grant for this workshop.

An optional field trip to Duke Farms took place on September 12th which introduced students to organic vegetable production and current issues. We had 10 students and some alumni participating.

The fourth workshop's focus was on the specialty crops cranberries and blueberries. Visits were made to the Phillip E. Marucci Cranberry and Blueberry Research station to meet with researchers to understand the close and unique relation they have with the farmers. Presentations from blueberry and cranberry breeding to land use in the Pinelands were presented. A 3<sup>rd</sup> generation cranberry grower who is part of the cranberry cooperative Ocean Spray explained the history of the cooperative which demonstrated the leadership of the cranberry growers to protect their specialty crop. Also in this workshop they learned how specialty crops are marketed, how specialty crop growers business practices may differ from others, especially during crisis situations that could potentially ruin their entire crop.

The fifth workshop included guest speakers from Jersey Fresh speaking to the participants on the history of the agricultural industry and the creation of Jersey Fresh. One of the assignments for the students in the class is to develop marketing strategies and assist NJ Fresh in launching their new promotional campaign. Another project completed in this workshop was the recoding of Public Service Announcements for the Agricultural industry. This exercise served two purposes to demonstrate effective communication skills using different media and to reach out to the public as emerging agricultural leaders to provide information to raise awareness for the industry. This workshop's primary focus was on public speaking, there were group presentations, elevator speeches and persuasive speaking exercises. The sixth workshop was conducted at the State Agricultural and Fruit and Vegetable Growers Convention. The objective of this workshop was to gain information on relevant agricultural topics, to observe the Convention Delegate Process for policy, network within the agricultural industry and meet agricultural leaders and experts in the field.

The sixth workshop was the New Jersey Vegetable Growers Convention and New Jersey State Agricultural Convention. Students attended various specialty crop sessions and mingled with many specialty crop growers while operating our educational convention booth. Public speaking sessions were integrated into the three-day convention. GMO labeling, labor and pest control and vegetable production workshops were included.

The seventh workshop was a tour of Ort Farms, Plainview Growers, Alstede Farms, and Tranquility Farms. This included discussions on grower issues, new technologies, marketing and diversification of farm products and value-added products. A lecture on Leadership Styles was integrated into the workshop. The students assessed our guest speakers' leadership styles and discussed their own leadership traits and skills that can be used to improve their sphere of influence.

**Accomplishments:** All of these workshops continue to prepare the participants in our programs to understand specialty crop production and the issues growers face, so that they can effectively advocate for the industry. Our participants recorded a series of Public Service Announcements which were

aired on the radio to promote specialty crops and have participated in multiple panel discussions with industry leaders. Developing the knowledge and confidence to present on various topics is an important part of the program. At the conclusion of the seminars, each class member gave a 5 minute presentation to the Assistant Secretary of Agriculture, Executive Director of USDA – Farm Service Agency and other industry leaders on their goals moving forward. Many voiced interest in getting involved in various ways to support specialty crop growers and the industry.

**Recommendations:** Moving forward, we would like to include more reading assignments on current topics related to specialty crops. We also would like to require interviews for the participants in the class with specialty crop producers and another project (similar to the Public Service Announcements) which directly impacts specialty crop producers.

**Conclusions:** In conclusion, we feel that the project was beneficial to specialty crop producers who will benefit from the service the class members provide back to the agricultural industry. We will be expanding on the alumni programming in the future and hope this continues to bring more specialty crop producers together.

**Partners in the Project:** The New Jersey Department of Agriculture, New Jersey Farm Bureau and Farm Credit East, and Burlington County College are the partners involved in the project. The NJALDP advisory committee includes representatives from each of these agencies who meet as needed (4-6 times) throughout the two-year program to evaluate the curriculum and offer suggestions. Also involved in this committee are alumni specialty crop producers. We currently have 4 advisory committee members who are specialty crop producers, from the nursery crops, cut flowers and vegetable industries. Their role is to review the topics and provide guidance for relevant field trips, speakers, and curricular activities. They also serve as speakers and lead panel discussions. Work for each seminar was generally completed by the program director who is contracted through Burlington County College. The Director begins planning about eight weeks before the seminar, and has a final schedule two weeks before the seminar occurs.

### **Goals and Outcomes Achieved:**

**The goal of this program is to increase the awareness of specialty crop issues by training 19 specialty crop producers to add to the current benchmark number of 173 specialty crop producers who have previously been trained by this program. Through the expansion of the NJALDP no less than nineteen additional specialty crop growers will receive additional business development and agricultural communications training through the use of SCBG funds.**

When this grant was written, we had hoped to be able to recruit a full class of specialty crop producers for the program. As the applications came in, we did not receive enough from specialty crop producers. Our class of 15 became both specialty crop producers and participants who also worked directly with specialty crop producers. For example, we accepted two staff members of the Northeast Organic Farming Association, an Assistant Coordinator of Farmland Preservation, Manager of Food Distribution Program with the NJ Department of Agriculture Division of Food and Nutrition, and Director of Food Service National Accounts for Ready Pac Foods. We see this mix of participants as beneficial to specialty crop producers because we now have a wider diversity of participants in the program who are looking to understand issues facing specialty crop producers.

**Program graduates are regularly surveyed to ascertain how they have utilized their NJALDP training. To track the number of class participants that have utilized the benefits of their training a survey will be conducted twelve months following the completion of the 2013-2015 class to track the number of class participants that have utilized the benefits of their training to assume leadership roles within the New Jersey agricultural community and will outline the impact of those roles to New Jersey's specialty crop industry.**

Due to the transition from Rutgers to Burlington County College, the class started in January 2013 and will be graduating in May 2015. We have not had the opportunity to survey the class following the completion of the class, but have asked for a final reflection. Some reflection statements include:

*“The exposure I gained about the challenges and intricacies of the industry allowed me to understand that farmers are faced with similar problems and challenges, and how important it is for us to understand and advocate for each other. I have been exposed to new management practices and growing practices that have provided me new ideas and inspiration. My goals for the future are to continue to be an active advocate for agriculture. I am a current member of the Morris County Board of Agriculture and a member in the Young Farmers and Ranchers. I am also a delegate for my county on the New Jersey Farmers Marketing Association. I would like to continue to be involved in legislature within the state and to help connect young people in agriculture through networking and education”*

*“When I started the program, I had a strong agricultural background but needed to find my voice and I think this program helped me do just that. Even when I am just working at the farm stand and speaking to customers, I think I can inform people about any misconceptions they may have. Even if you can help one person understand the uses of GMO products, or why we spray crops, if they get your connection with them, they may spread the word to a friend. Moving forward after NJALDP, I want to continue to encourage myself to get involved in the agricultural community. This includes being able to call my Senator and make an impressive case on a position. I want to attend County Board of Agriculture meetings and make them a priority.”*

*“I wanted to visit different Ag operations and learn about how government affects agriculture throughout the state so I could better understand the industry I work to preserve. If you are governing something, you better be knowledgeable about it. That is why the visit to the cranberry and blueberry farms was valuable to me as there are quite a few berry farms in Burlington County and some of them are preserved.”*

**Program graduates regularly assume leadership positions within the New Jersey agricultural and specialty crop community. They have an impressive track record of participation on the State Agricultural Development Council, state wide commodity organizations, on their county boards, on the State Board of Agriculture and in once instance as a Warren County Freeholder.**

Our current class is currently in the process of reaching out to alumni with a survey to assess alumni roles in leadership positions. However, very quickly, we can report that a recent graduate was elected to the state board of agriculture, another serves on the Rutgers Board of Managers, another served as president of the New Jersey Vegetable growers association and 5 of our current students attended the League of Municipalities conference and spoke as representatives of the industry. We expect once the survey is complete we will have clearer data to share on our alumni as we celebrate the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the program.

**The expanded NJALDP training will provide additional program access to specialty crop producers who otherwise do not have the resources or ability to commit to full participation in the more comprehensive program which requires 10 separate multiple day seminars in addition to domestic and international travel.**

An optional field trip to Duke Farms took place on September 12<sup>th</sup>, 2013 which introduced participants to organic vegetable production and current issues.

**The first distinct, quantifiable and measurable outcome that directly and meaningfully supports the project's purpose is conducted at the conclusion of each seminar, when students are asked to evaluate each area of study and compare what they knew before the seminar to what they know after completing it. Evaluations are then tabulated to calculate the percentage increase in knowledge for each student, and for the class overall.**

**PLEASE SEE THE ATTACHED SURVEY RESULTS**

**Lessons Learned:**

Specialty crop production is extremely important to New Jersey's economy. We are currently looking to recruit our next class and will try to recruit from each of the specialty crop areas to provide a diverse mix of participants in the program. We will also include a variety of speakers, tours, reading assignments and projects to cover as many of the specialty crop areas as possible throughout the two year program.

**Additional Information**

The funding provided by USDA was only 27% of the total budget for instruction (\$54,000) contracted with BCC.

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Please circle the most appropriate response to the level of knowledge you knew **before**:

Leadership	Not aware of topic	0%	Slightly aware of topic	31%	Moderately aware of topic	54%	Proficiently aware of topic	15%
Marketing	Not aware of topic	8%	Slightly aware of topic	31%	Moderately aware of topic	38%	Proficiently aware of topic	23%
Advocacy	Not aware of topic	0%	Slightly aware of topic	54%	Moderately aware of topic	38%	Proficiently aware of topic	8%
Public Speaking	Not aware of topic	0%	Slightly aware of topic	0%	Moderately aware of topic	69%	Proficiently aware of topic	31%
Cranberries/Blueberries	Not aware of topic	23%	Slightly aware of topic	38%	Moderately aware of topic	23%	Proficiently aware of topic	8%
Nursery Industry	Not aware of topic	31%	Slightly aware of topic	23%	Moderately aware of topic	38%	Proficiently aware of topic	8%
Dairy Industry	Not aware of topic	23%	Slightly aware of topic	38%	Moderately aware of topic	23%	Proficiently aware of topic	15%
Pinelands Issues	Not aware of topic	54%	Slightly aware of topic	23%	Moderately aware of topic	15%	Proficiently aware of topic	8%
Highlands Issues	Not aware of topic	38%	Slightly aware of topic	23%	Moderately aware of topic	38%	Proficiently aware of topic	0%
Legislative Process	Not aware of topic	8%	Slightly aware of topic	69%	Moderately aware of topic	23%	Proficiently aware of topic	0%
Agri-Tourism Industry	Not aware of topic	15%	Slightly aware of topic	31%	Moderately aware of topic	23%	Proficiently aware of topic	31%
Aquaculture Industry	Not aware of topic	46%	Slightly aware of topic	46%	Moderately aware of topic	8%	Proficiently aware of topic	0%

Please circle the most appropriate response to the level of knowledge you knew **after**:

Leadership	Not aware of topic	0%	Slightly aware of topic	0%	Moderately aware of topic	46%	Proficiently aware of topic	54%
Marketing	Not aware of topic	0%	Slightly aware of topic	0%	Moderately aware of topic	38%	Proficiently aware of topic	62%
Advocacy	Not aware of topic	0%	Slightly aware of topic	0%	Moderately aware of topic	63%	Proficiently aware of topic	31%
Public Speaking	Not aware of topic	0%	Slightly aware of topic	0%	Moderately aware of topic	23%	Proficiently aware of topic	77%
Cranberries/Blueberries	Not aware of topic	0%	Slightly aware of topic	8%	Moderately aware of topic	62%	Proficiently aware of topic	31%
Nursery Industry	Not aware of topic	0%	Slightly aware of topic	15%	Moderately aware of topic	54%	Proficiently aware of topic	31%
Dairy Industry	Not aware of topic	0%	Slightly aware of topic	8%	Moderately aware of topic	62%	Proficiently aware of topic	23%
Pinelands Issues	Not aware of topic	0%	Slightly aware of topic	8%	Moderately aware of topic	62%	Proficiently aware of topic	23%
Highlands Issues	Not aware of topic	0%	Slightly aware of topic	15%	Moderately aware of topic	62%	Proficiently aware of topic	15%
Legislative Process	Not aware of topic	0%	Slightly aware of topic	8%	Moderately aware of topic	62%	Proficiently aware of topic	23%
Agri-Tourism Industry	Not aware of topic	0%	Slightly aware of topic	0%	Moderately aware of topic	46%	Proficiently aware of topic	46%
Aquaculture Industry	Not aware of topic	0%	Slightly aware of topic	0%	Moderately aware of topic	77%	Proficiently aware of topic	15%

## **SCBG Agreement # 12-25-B-1243**

Final Performance Report  
December 29, 2014

### **Tri-County Cooperative Auction**

**Project Title:** “Increasing Efficiency at Tri-County Auction Market Association”

#### **Project Summary:**

The auction software currently in use was last updated approximately 12 years ago. It is currently maxed out to a total of 5 computers, all old and slow as the program is too old to be adapted to the newest technologies. The program is tedious under the best of circumstances but if the printer has a glitch, or someone trying to pay has a question that must be investigated on the primary computer the line is held up. On a busy night it can take upwards of 30 minutes to pay. The customers can get really stressed and angry.

With the total association sales almost doubling in the last three years, and direct to the customer sales increasing 86% in 2010, we have many new smaller buyers and much more numerous small transactions. They are drawn to the time saving element of being able to come in, pick up a few things and go home instead of our traditional auction. This takes a fraction of the time to wait through an entire auction to purchase the desired few items.

With our current computer system, the biggest complaint from our customers is that it takes longer to pay than to choose the products they wish to purchase and load their trucks. As sales continue to grow, which is expected, this computer system becomes an even greater nightmare.

Tri-County is in need of a computer software program and a sufficient number of personal computers to handle the existing sales more efficiently than the current system in order to accommodate continued growth of the auction market. Five new computers and a new, efficient program designed for auction/cooperative type sales will increase our efficiency dramatically which is critical as we continue to grow.

#### **Project Approach:**

1. Software was purchased for 6 computer stations. – Manager Pegi Ballister-Howells
2. Six computers were purchased. – Computer Consultant
3. Computers and printers were set up by a computer consultant.
4. The new software was installed by a computer consultant
5. Data was transferred from old DOS program to new program. – Computer Consultant
6. Hand held data input stations were set-up. – Computer Consultant
7. New program training was provided from supplier. – Manager Pegi Ballister-Howells
8. Staff was trained. – Manager Pegi Ballister-Howells
9. The new system was functioning in about two months after the grant funds were received. – Computer Consultant

More than Ninety-nine percent of the commodities that go through the computer system are specialty crops. All items are identified on the invoice. The computer system has been expanded to include two additional computers which were purchased and installed using the cooperative's own funds so the fraction of the non-specialty federal funding for this project greatly outweighs the less than one percent of any non-specialty crops that might benefit from this program.

No partners outside the membership of the partners participated in the project.

**Goals and Outcomes Achieved:**

Prior to the project sellers waited 14- 30 days to be paid.

After the project the wait time has been reduced to less than 10 days.

This project has decreased payment times. This project has reduced the number of steps required to process anything. Any changes can be made from the satellite computer terminals instead of waiting for access to the master computer. Since the computer interface is no longer done using a DOS based interface the system is now much more user friendly and training staff to use the system has become more intuitive and self-explanatory and greatly reduces the stress on staff. Average wait time to complete 500 transactions has been reduced from 6 hours to ninety minutes.

New computers for check out stations were purchased and installed

New desktop computers were purchased and installed on auction manager's desk and on the office manager's desk

Laptop computer was purchased and all necessary software installed

New Point of Sale system was created and installed on all computers

Data was transferred from old computers to the new computers

Wireless tablets were purchased and set up at two data input stations on the direct sales dock and auction block

Information from the handheld data input systems can now be sent to the computer system through the wireless router.

The driver's license reader is able to increase the speed of registration.

Training for the office manager on new system completed

Office staff training completed

All projects planned for the reporting period were accomplished. Wait time to check out has decreased dramatically and office efficiency has been vastly increased.

**Beneficiaries;**

The Co-ops 650 buyers are now benefiting from dramatically reduced check-out wait times and office efficiency has been vastly increased.

**Lessoned Learned;**

New technologies and proper training can increase performance times and staff efficiency. Additionally, the new software allows for the creation of detailed reports which can inform future buying and selling decisions and future demand for related supplies. Providing detailed product information and pricing information also makes for better information on overall volume and price per package which can inform future planting decisions.

**Contact Person;**

Bill Dea

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**New Jersey Council of Farmers and Communities**

Final Performance Report  
June 24, 2014

**Project Title:**

**“Strengthen the Competitiveness of Specialty Crops through Economic Stimulus, Marketing, and Mentoring via: Farmers Assistance Incubator, Healthy Lifestyle Education, and Community Chef Culinary Specialty Crop Celebrations.”**

**Project Summary:**

This New Jersey Council of Farmers and Communities (NJCF) grant project funded new program activities that support specialty crop competitiveness using state principles and initiatives outlined through Jersey Fresh, Know your Farmer Know Your Food, Sustainable Jersey’s, *Buy Local* and the Mayors Wellness Campaign to promote healthy lifestyles for all ages and communities. The activities included the mentoring of small and new to tailgating farmers who were raising specialty crops {verified through submitted crop plans to NJCF}; educated the consumer about eating specialty crops that are Jersey Fresh and buying specialty crops available locally. NJCF’s grant project supported small, non-tailgate participant farmers’ attendance at NJCF markets in 2012 and 2013; provided family nutritional education for eating specialty crops vegetables and the many ways to prepare them for optimum taste flavor and variety; and celebrated specialty crops through community chef culinary abilities. These activities helped to support the local to table objective while supporting consumer confidence through source verified farm produce, while promoting specialty crops.

NJCF believes the activities are extremely important during times when the US population’s obesity, including youth, is on the rise, genetically modified seeds and foods are becoming more intergraded in the main stream, and the scales of a depressed local economy could force small farm operations to succumb to the temptations of construction development of their land acres, intensifying Jersey sprawl, these reasons were specific in promoting specialty crops for public consumption and awareness.

**Project Approach**

NJCF heightened its awareness of small niche farmers inexperienced with tailgate marketing and created an outreach program to encourage and support them through grant funding to attend as many market day appearances as possible while mentoring them regarding display, equipment needs, staffing in some cases, introduction and embracement in the NJCF community farmer markets in their close proximity.

o each incubator community market manager welcomed new farmers, provided advertisement for their appearances, offered staffing when necessary, and encouraged sampling and tastings of their grown specialty crops, raised for taste and flavor instead of uniformity. The Market managers play a key role in the markets themselves but proved invaluable in the incubator program for farmers; and as specialty crop educators for the consumers. Market Mangers reviewed all previously submitted crop plans to ensure the promotion of specialty crops with each incubator farmer that participated.

**Goals and Outcomes Achieved**  
**Activities Performed**

Advertising Federal Grant Funded

**DIRECT MARKETING**

The New Jersey Council of Farmers and Communities Board of Directors embarked upon a new bold, branded advertising campaign which began at the start of the growing season in 2012 to highlight Jersey Specialty Crops, buying direct at local NJCFC markets from Jersey Farmers. **REAL FARMERS. REAL FOOD.**

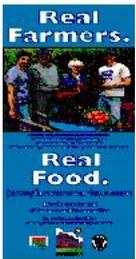
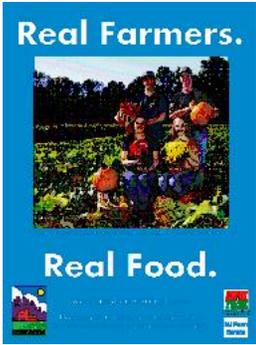
Goals: Increase consumer level of awareness for Jersey Specialty Crops using

A variety of media delivery vehicles: web based, Internet ads, electronic social media and e-mail blasts, and print; to gain consumer attention at all ages.

Accomplishments: The activity was carried out on two fronts statewide direct advertising for NJCFC markets by NJCFC, and individual community markets' advertising specific to their target areas, with 10 towns taking part in the 50% reimbursement funded NJCFC Mini Grant Program enabling additional dollars in each community to be utilized for increased specialty crop advertising resulting in increased consumer awareness of Specialty Crops. Farmers at NJCFC markets reported an **average sales, per consumer, per market visit, was increased of 8 %**. Farmers noted that prior to the increased advertising an average sale per consumer, per market visit, would average about \$25.00 spent on specialty crops, while during the ad and tastings campaign the average sale was greater than \$27.00 per consumer, per visit. Advertisements included farmers showcasing select specialty crops and equipment used for the sole purpose of expediting the specialty crop succession planting, allowing farmers to increase specialty crop productivity and longer consumer availability on their farms.

Direct ads placement: NJ.com, Edible Magazine Summer & Fall, Edible Cook Book, FIOS: Food Network, SNY, History, HGTV, YES, FIOS1, CMT, Hallmark, Oxygen, SOAP, diy, FLN, Central and Union Zones





**MINI GRANT ACCOUNTING 2012**

2012 NJCFC Mini grant submissions report:

Chatham Farmers Market	\$3,149.17 qualified	\$500.00 grant
Elizabeth Farmers Market	\$3500.00 qualified	\$500.00 grant

Highland Park Farmers Market	\$1255.00 qualified	\$500.00 grant
Kearny Farmers Market	\$2850.00 qualified	\$500.00 grant
Madison Farmers Market	\$800.00 qualified	\$400.00 grant
Maplewood Farmers Market	\$ 1613.00 qualified	\$500.00 grant
Morristown Farmers Market	\$2658.94 qualified	\$500.00 grant
Roselle Park Farmers Market	\$751.02 qualified	\$371.51 grant
Troy Towers Union City	\$115.36 qualified	\$57.68 grant
<u>Westfield Farmers Market</u>	<u>\$1000.00 qualified</u>	<u>\$500.00 grant</u>
	<b>\$17,692.49 ad \$ spent</b>	<b>\$4,329.19</b>

A measurable outcome was that greater than four times the grant reimbursement amount of advertising was actually produced in the media in regional locations specific to NJCFC markets. The mini grant program proved to be a powerful way to leverage increased specialty crop advertising beyond the direct advertising contracted by the NJCFC Board of directors and NJCFC Members themselves in their direct ad campaign; quadrupling Specialty Crop exposure to the public.

Accomplishments: The advertising activity was carried out on two fronts: statewide direct advertising for NJCFC markets by NJCFC, and individual NJCFC community markets' advertising specific to their target areas, 10 towns took part in 2012 for 50% reimbursement, funded NJCFC Mini Grant Program enabling additional dollars in each community to be utilized for increased advertising resulting in increased consumer awareness of Specialty Crops. Farmers at NJCFC markets reported an average sales increase of 8%.

#### Farm / Farmer Incubator Program

#### INCUBATOR – NEW FARMERS OF SPECIALTY CROPS ATTENDED NJCFC MARKETS

Goal: Introduce tailgate markets to new non-participating farmers growing Specialty Crops  
 Offer risk free participation for new farmers  
 Provide for varied consumer selection of Specialty Crops

Incubator Farms and Farmers that grew specialty crops received their first market appearances fees and upfront costs all covered through the grant for the growth and promotion solely of specialty crops. The specialty crop verification was accomplished by pre-submitted crop plans and inspected by the NJCFC Inspector when each farm and community market was visited. Their only risk was their time. In each case the farmer had insufficient specialty crop to keep sustained sales during the program, selling out of their specialty crops each market appearance! Also, consumer interest was gauged by these new to-market farmers, gaining knowledge about specialty crop selection and amounts to grow in future years and experiencing visits to tailgate markets. Farmers learned of specialty crop popularity and existing farmers’ learned consumer interest for niche farmers’ specialty crops. Produce grown for taste and flavor not uniformity, color or perfection.

o Accomplishments: NJCFC Markets hosted seven of the eight contracted farmers. One farmer failed to participate as his five acre farm came under criticism and neighborhood threat to disallow “commercial farming” in their community. Each new farmer reported unexpected support directly from the consumers in retail sales, and encouragement to continue and repeat market appearances at the market towns that hosted, and to increase tailgating more than once in week. The varied of Specialty Crops increased at the participating markets by 3 fold as different varieties of the same crop where now being offered. A Utopia for the consumer. Prior to the Specialty Crop promotion farmers offered, on average, 3 specialty crops, but during the specialty crop promotion the focus increased to threefold and varieties of specialty crops increased, offering greater exposure of specialty crops to the public.

**2012 & 2013 Incubator Farm / Farmer Participants / Specialty Crop**

Shady Hill Homestead – Spices and Herbs, also raising Berkshire Pigs, American Guinea Hogs <u>All natural fresh herbs and spices</u> Kim Radecky 139 Hawks Schoolhouse Road Bloomsbury, NJ 08804 908-763-5351	Chatham Market
Chick-a-Dee Creek Farms – <u>Organic produce</u> Jess Niederer PO Box 358 Pennington, NJ 08534	Montgomery Market
Whistling Wolf Farms LLC – <u>Conventional Produce</u> Helen Wolf Chandler PO Box 501 3 Bridges NJ 0887	Metuchen Market
Ralston Farms – <u>Conventional Produce</u> Quinton Grochala 327 Route 24 West Mendham NJ	Chatham Market

908-334-8018	
Country Stand – <u>Conventional Produce</u> Walt Cyck 212 Jones Town Road Oxford, NJ 07863	Union City Market Allendale Market Metuchen Market
Chapman Mushrooms – <u>all varieties of Mushrooms</u> Cindy & Mark Chapman 41 Sunset Trail Denville, NJ 07834 973-627-1224	Chatham Market

Culinary Chef and Dietitian Demos and Educational Programs

- Goals: Raise the level of awareness for Specialty Crops, uses, alternate preparation, and tasteful meals  
 Increase sales of Specialty Crops in turn increase farmers’ profitability/proceeds & overall use of Specialty Crops  
 Educate the public of all ages as to the health benefits of consuming Specialty Crops  
 Instruct on varied Specialty Crops preparation and recipes offering recipe ingredients and know how preparation

Chefs delighted in showcasing their culinary skills, of recommending their local establishment for dining, and enjoyed purchasing specialty crop produce direct from the farmers for their businesses. The demonstrations had all ages participate with an Iron Chef cook off for junior high level students with culinary known local chefs judging. This was great FUN and made the markets a destination place during the activities where consumers lingered talked with chefs , neighbors and farmers.

Accomplishments: Multiple tastings at all levels of complexity and interest were offered in many NJCFC community markets. Consumers, residents of the market communities, and neighboring nearby communities noted this to be by far to be the most engaging and ‘community sense’ development of the markets. Everyone tasted, smelled and enjoyed the educational and culinary cuisine being offered. The most talked about aspect of the program activities.

**BENEFICIARIES**

o **Local consumer residents and neighboring community consumers:** Participating Communities consumer participation ranged from 800 consumers on a given event day to 1200 and 1500 in some larger communities that participated. This was tracked by entrance tokens to the events at various sites.

- o **Economic stimulus for local businesses:** Most of the market participants are communities that have their markets located in close proximity to their business districts. The mere proximity allowed for economic stimulus through consumer spill over into retail shops, service oriented businesses and local dining options.
- o **Tailgate farmers and tailgate incubator farmers:** While two farmers participated in the first season of the incubator program that number grew to 6 farmers in 2013 participating a 300% increase in farmer participation.
- o **The preservation of farmland:** an increased number of farmers working their land acres and producing specialty crops for consumers while seeing increased sales profits promoted farmland perseveration in New Jersey.

### **LESSONS LEARNED**

- o Partnering with media outlets with wide distribution lists multiplies the exposure desired with less effort, less expense and a rapid sharing of information benefitting all stakeholders. The proposed leaflet brochure with the market site listings was changed to a web based informational brochure, resulting in greater exposure with the current information age, technology driven advertising and social media viral networking resulting in less than a 7% change noted in the grant funded budget. This changed enhanced the organization's website; and delivered the same message via the statewide publication *The edible Magazine*. This brochure vehicle of advertising proved more efficient, cheaper, and remained evergreen for the length of the grant program with web presence and quarterly publication dates instead of printing a single brochure with no vehicle of distribution for exposure. This partnership with the *edible Magazine* taught the NJCFC Board of Directors a valuable advertising lesson.
- o The annual threefold brochure was not printed; but instead developed into a web based brochure. It was also inserted in *The edible Magazine*. NJCFC Board of Directors realized that a static brochure needed to be reevaluated and it was determined to not be cost effective,, without a distribution vehicle, and lacked evergreen appeal. This project was redefined as a web based brochure and a partnership was forged with *The edible Magazine* to send the message to a statewide distribution vehicle by adding the information into the Real Food Real Farmer ads. This served the NJCFC Council well and allowed for a greater exposure.
- o One Farmer was unable to participate in the incubator program in 2012 being disallowed to sell his produce after planting five acres due to community opposition.
- o The photographer fee was under budgeted for the program, and thus the additional expense was paid for by NJCFC.
- O The Mini Grant Program leverages so much more advertising for Specialty Crops than can be afforded by NJCFC alone.

### **CONTACT PERSON**

o Janice R. Piccolo, NJCFC VP, Chatham Borough Farmers' Market Manager, 54 Fairmount Avenue Chatham, NJ 07928, 973-635-0674 x 200  
[jpiccolo@chatahmborough.org](mailto:jpiccolo@chatahmborough.org)

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Checkbook ledger and invoices from vendors are available as proof of execution.

### Other Additional Information:

NEW JERSEY COUNCIL of FARMERS and COMMUNITIES 2012 FARMERS' MARKETS

When & Where to get member markets\* produce in North & Central Jersey towns

www.t-r-s-n-farmersmarkets.com

SUNDAY	MONDAY	Tuesday	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
Morristown 8:30 am - 2 pm Momstown Parking. Authority lot #10 Spring & Morris Streets Info: 973-455-1133	Maplewood 2 pm - 7 pm Indiana St. Pt 1 <g. lot 11 Springfield Ave Info: 973-762-8120 ext 2003	East Orange 9 am - 5 pm Halsted St. Cenml Ave Info: 973-4-4153	Jersey City - Journal Sq 10 am - 7:30 pm Blvd between St > N. li: PIMlnla / tffe Info: 201-798-6055	Kearny 12 pm - 6 pm Mandee's parking lot. Kearny Ave between Bergen & Afton St Info: 201-955-7400	Highland Park 11 am - 5:30 pm Raritan Ave. between 211d rt 1n1 Aves Info: 732-828 8444	Bernardsville 8 am - 1 pm Rt. 202 li Claremont Rd at the NJ Transit lot Info: 908-766836
Red Bank 9 am - 1 pm 2 Bridge Ave. Info: 732-530-8713	Spartanburg 12 noon - 6 pm Summer 101 Mountain Ave Fall Ruby Feld, Caldwell Place Info: 973-912-2202	Elizabeth 10 am - 6 pm 1 Union Square Plaza Info: 908-966-6660	New Providence 12 noon - 6 pm Municipal Center Front Parking lot 360 Elkwood Ave Info: 908-598-2532	Madison 2 pm - 7 pm Summer Waverly Plate Fall Green Vistae Rd. Info: 973-937-8084	Millburn Bam - 1 pm Municipal Parking lot on Essex St. & Town Hall Info: 973 379-2341	Chatham 8 am - 1 pm RR Plaza South on Fairmount Ave. Info: 973 635-0674x 588
Denville 8:30 am - 1 pm Bloomfield Ave Parking lot Info: 201-417-2335		Hoboken 3 pm - 7:30 pm Washington St between Newark and Observer Hwy 1 block from PATH Info: 201-420-2277	Roselle Park 1 pm - 6 pm Corner, Chestnut St li E. Grant Ave. Info: 908-2-45-0666	Bayonne City 10 am - 6 pm Fitzpatrick Park 2-r'1 St. & Ave. C Info: 201-58-6010	West Orange 12 Noon - 6 pm 66 Main St parking lot Behind Town Hall Info: 973-325-4109	Metuchen 9 am - 2 pm Peart St Parking Lot Info: 732-548-2964
Troy Towers Farmers Market in Union City 8 am - 2 pm 380 Mountain Rd. Info: 201-865 6000		Rtwnla e 2:30 pm - 7 pm 211 Hamburg Tpke. Info: 973-835-4060	Cedar Grove Mcrcpn's Fann 903 Pompton Ave. Info: 2014-953-4895	Uptown Hoboken 3 pm - 7:30 pm 13th & Hudson St. Info: not available	Jersey City - Journal Sq. 12 noon to 7 pm Kennedy Blvd. between Sip Ave and Pavonia Ave Info: 201-798-6055	Westfield 8:30 am to 2 pm NJ Transit Parking lot. South Ave Info: 908-233 3021
				Uptown Hoboken 1 pm - 7:30 pm 13 <sup>th</sup> and Hudson St. Info: not available		Netcong 9 am - 2 pm 23 Maple Ave. Info: 973-896-5990
						Montgomery 9 am - 2 pm 1340 US HWY 206 SlcRlman In Village Shopper Center Info: 908-359-4787

NEW JERSEY COUNCIL OF FARMERS AND COMMUNITIES  
 Specialty Crop FINAL Grant Report 12-16-13

CATEGORY	PROPOSED	ACTUAL FUNDING EXPENDED		
		GA GRANT FUNDS	CFC CASH MATCH	IND NJCFC MATCH
PERSONNEL				
Culinary Chef Demos (60 Hrs. @ \$17/hr)				
Dietitian & BOH Education & Community Specialty Crop Celebrations (240 hrs. @ \$17}				
NJCFC Grant	\$40000		\$11,200.00	
Advertising Photographer	\$2000	\$200.00	\$ 2,100.00	
EQUIPMENT				
Market Tents, Tables, Chairs,				
CONTRACTUAL				
NJCFC Direct <i>Viamedia</i> <i>NJNPublishingNJ.com</i> <i>NOFA ConferenceAD</i> <i>The edible Magazine</i>		\$2,500.00 \$3,975.00 \$650.00		
Mini Grant Community Advertising				
Web Brochure	\$1,450.00	\$975.00		
Farmer Incubator Program			\$855.00	
Farmer & Community Inspection Fees				
TOTALS	\$34,270.00	13950.00	\$43,805.81	21772.49
TOTAL FINAL PROJECT VALUE				\$79,529.00

CONTACT PERSON

Janice R. Piccolo, NJCFC VP,  
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973-635-0674 x 200  
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**Northeast Organic Farming Association of New Jersey**

Final Performance Report

December 16, 2014

**PROJECT TITLE**

Road to Certification Training Course

**PROJECT SUMMARY**

New Jersey is situated in an excellent marketing position, with easy access to New York City, Philadelphia, and Baltimore. In addition to a large number of potential customers, the organic food market is expanding and offers many opportunities for individuals to become involved, regardless of scale. In addition, organic certification adds a significant price premium to many specialty crops—with organic prices ranging between five and one hundred percent greater than conventional, depending on the season and crop. Unfortunately, many producers find the process of certification to be confusing and may avoid certification as a result. Reasons cited from some established farmers include: (1) lack of technical support for organic production, (2) certification is costly, (3) the process is confusing, (4) increased production costs, and (5) direct marketing does not require certification for the price premium. The Northeast Organic Farming Association of New Jersey (NOFA-NJ) developed a “how-to” course for specialty crop producers interested in learning about the organic certification process, specific to New Jersey. The course includes information for conventional farmers interested in total or partial conversion to organic, beginning farmers undergoing transition, and uncertified farmers who are currently following organic production principles, but have avoided the process. Organic certification offers New Jersey’s specialty crop farmers another way to add value to their product and enter into a growing market. This 9.5 billion dollar industry grew eleven percent in 2009, greater than the total organic industry growth of five percent. In addition to providing a price incentive in a growing market, organic certification also opens a new avenue of funding opportunities from various government, non-profit, and corporate entities. In a state with high land cost and small land parcels, it is imperative for small and medium farms to maximize their per acreage profit in order to stay in business.

**PROJECT APPROACH**

The Technical Services Specialist created a course curriculum that breaks down the organic certification process in New Jersey. Workbooks were assembled from resources available through multiple organizations. The purpose of the workbook is to reinforce and deepen the participants’ knowledge of certification regulations and also show the technical assistance available to farmers who are certified. Resources were chosen from the following organizations: National Organic Program, Organic Materials Resource Institute, Carolina Farm Stewardship Association, National Sustainable Agriculture Information Service, and the National Young Farmers Coalition. Guest speakers were a crucial part of the course – providing a glimpse inside the industry. Each session was designed to host a guest speaker with a different perspective: certified organic farmers, trained inspectors, and accredited certifying agents. Guest speakers were recruited through NOFA-NJ’s connections in the industry and, in total, seven farmers participated in the three offerings, one inspector participated in two offerings, and one accredited certifying agent participated in two offerings. A webpage was created to acknowledge the grant, host course registration, and

provide scheduling information. Press releases and email newsletters were sent to over a thousand people, advertising the course offering, with 715 people opening the emails.

Three sessions, two structured as three three-hour classes and one structured as one eight-hour class, were offered during the grant period. One class was held in Princeton, NJ, one held in Hillsborough, NJ, and one held in Harmony, NJ. Nineteen farmers completed the course, with two registrants connecting remotely during the Hillsborough session. The one-day format was chosen based on reducing the cost of running the class and encouraging farmers from further distances to travel to the class site. The class will be offered in this format in the future.

**GOALS AND OUTCOMES ACHIEVED**

Of the nineteen farmers who participated, sixteen evaluations were conducted. Fifteen participants increased their knowledge on topics related to organic certification, twelve are better able to answer the question “Is organic certification right for me?,” two registered as exempt operations with the New Jersey Department of Agriculture, and one applied and was granted organic certification. One other participant has the application materials and is in the process of applying for certification. Three participants have requested on-farm consultations in the winter of 2015 to solidify plans. Below is the summary of responses from participants.

Statement	Agree	Disagree	Not Applicable	If you disagree or the question is not applicable, please explain.
I have successfully completed an Organic Systems Plan (OSP).	3	7	6	Seven farmers have not yet completed an OSP. Two farmers are exempt from preparing an OSP, but will qualify as exempt. Two participants do not own farms, one has decided not to apply for certification, and one is not eligible for certification.
I will use this OSP to seek organic certification.	3		13	
Organic certification will help me be more competitive in the specialty crops market.	11	2	3	One farmer did not believe that certification presented enough marketing benefits to justify the effort and one plans to apply but does not believe it will materially affect his income. Three attendees do not sell products.
This course made me feel more positive about organic certification.	16			
This course increased my understanding of organic production regulations and techniques.	16			
I would recommend this course to someone who is interested in learning about organic certification.	16			

We did not reach the number of farmers that we had intended to (50 was the original goal), but this was probably due to the offerings being consolidated into one year (instead of over two years). The nature of organic certification, which requires a three year transition period in the event of past use of prohibited materials, and the potentially lengthy review process, requires long-term tracking to truly measure the impact of this work. The curriculum took longer than planned to develop, which pushed the class offerings to 2014. In 2015, a follow-up survey will be issued to determine whether goals were met.

### BENEFICIARIES

Of the nineteen farmers who participated, eighteen are beginning farmers, eight are female, and sixteen are growing on less than fifty acres.

### LESSONS LEARNED

The decision whether to seek organic certification is very complicated, as it deals with philosophy as much as regulation, in most cases. We expected that most farmers who enrolled in the class would have made the decision earlier and seeking assistance in navigating the process, but a number of farmers had not decided on organic certification prior to the course. This changed the tone of the course slightly, with some questions on production methods. The class did not intend to provide information on production methods, simply on the certification process, so this was an unexpected challenge. After the first session, a note was posted on the webpage that specifies that the class does not teach participants how to farm organically and separate consultations were arranged with these specific farmers.

A concern that was raised during this course was the availability of organic-approved amendments, which, compared to other states, is limited. The increased cost, due to shipping fees and other out-state-sourcing concerns, affects the gains that a farmer would realize after certification. This is another important consideration that a farmer must include in the decision-making process.

The course walked through the regulations affecting the production and certification of specialty crops. Many of the participants were not familiar with the USDA-NOP website and the guidance documents available through the Organic Program. Also, many had never read organic regulations in its entirety – even if they decided that they would like to seek certification. Reading the regulations and discussing their meaning was an important part of the course.

The Q&A session with established organic farmers provided the most convincing evidence that certification can positively impact the value of specialty crops. The organic farmers provided detailed and helpful information on pricing, regulations, marketing, and navigating the application process.

Finally, the one-day format helped consolidate and streamline the material, with a more logical flow. The three-session format required referencing back to material from weeks ago and hopping between subjects seemed to affect the ability of participants to understand and retain the subject matter. By focusing a section on materials, a section on record-keeping, and a section on organic control points, for example, it was easier to reference back to this information when going through the Organic System Plan preparation section later in the day.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

N/A

CONTACT PERSON

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## **SCBG Agreement # 12-25-B-1243**

Final Report  
March 28, 2013

### **Trenton Farmers Market**

**Project Title:** “Jersey Fresh Days”

#### **Project Summary:**

Our goal was to promote Jersey Fresh Fruits and Vegetables and to educate and entice customers to both buy and eat local.

The objective was to host six Jersey Fresh Days and the Market was able to sponsor a total of seven such days.

The first Jersey Fresh Day was held on June 1, 2012. It was Jersey Fresh Strawberry Day and delicious piece of cake topped with whipped cream and Jersey Fresh Strawberries were offered to the public. The market served approximately 750 desserts. The following event was Jersey Fresh Blueberry Day held on June 22<sup>nd</sup> with patrons treated to a delicious piece of cake topped with whipped cream and Jersey Fresh Blueberries...serving again approximately 750 samples.

On June 7<sup>th</sup> the Market held our first cooking demonstration featuring Spinach and Leeks and serving approximately 150 samples as well as providing copies of recipes to all interested customers

July 14<sup>th</sup> was Jersey Fresh Sweet Corn Day and approximately 900 ears of cooked corn were served to customers with ample supplies of butter, salt and napkins.

Jersey Fresh peach Day was next on August 3<sup>rd</sup> with approximately 800 desserts served which consisted of a delicious piece of cake topped with whipped cream and Jersey Fresh Peaches.

On August 25<sup>th</sup> we celebrated Jersey Fresh Melon Day serving approximately 1,000 samples of Jersey Fresh Melons including watermelon both seeded and unseeded, as well a red and yellow watermelon, cantaloupe, honeydew, Crenshaw and gold kings.

The next promotional event was Jersey Fresh Tomato Salad Day which, although not part of the original grant application, the Market supported with its resources on September 22<sup>nd</sup> and approximately 400 Tomato Salads were served to customers.

October 13<sup>th</sup> was the final Jersey Fresh Day and was dubbed Jersey Fresh Caramel Apple Day. Approximately 850 desserts were served which included a cored apple in a bowl topped with warm caramel and topped with crushed peanuts for those who wanted them.

Cooking Demonstrations were held on June 7<sup>th</sup> and on June 24<sup>th</sup> featuring Zucchini with approximately 150 samples distributed.

On June 21<sup>st</sup> Blueberries were featured in both Pirogues and Fritters serving approximately 200 free samples.

On August 23<sup>rd</sup> Grilled Jersey Fresh veggies were featured as a side dish, in a sandwich, in a Frittata and over Pasta. Again approximately 200 samples were given free to patrons.

August 30<sup>th</sup> we named our cooking demo “Easy Bruschetta” and served approximately 150 samples. With exception of the June 7<sup>th</sup> demonstration the above were basically done in house and at no cost with the respective farmers and vendors donating all the necessary ingredients.

On September 20<sup>th</sup> and October 4<sup>th</sup> the demonstrations were given by Kelly Edelstein a local chef and previous restaurant proprietor.

September 20<sup>th</sup> Pasta with Summer Fresh Tomato Pan Sauce with Mini Zucchini/Herb Meat Balls was served Free along with free copies of recipes to approximately 200 people.

On October 4<sup>th</sup> Eggplant Relish with Toasted Garlic Rounds was featured and approximately 150 free samples were served to the patrons.

The Market is comprised of farmer vendors. All of them are family operations and support in most cases themselves as well as their children and in some cases their grandchildren. Our “Jersey Fresh Days” and cooking demonstrations gave their crops added attention and certainly was an enticement for customers to purchase these crops and attempt to utilize them as demonstrated in all of the free samples distributed. In short it was a win, win for farmers and customers...farmers financially and customers health wise in that they are buying and eating local...Fresh, Fresh and Fresh!

The number of consumers visiting the Market on Jersey Fresh Days on average increased at least 30%.

### **Project Approach:**

Our very generous farmer growers donated all the necessary fruits and vegetables for each of our Jersey Fresh Days. Advertising for each of the days was done in any combination of T.V., radio and newspaper to attract customers to each of the Jersey Fresh Days. Hostesses were hired and paid out of the project funding. All days were posted on our website as well as posters in advance of each of the days posted on all six entrances to the Market.

The same was done for each of our cooking demonstrations and again our farmer growers were most generous in providing the necessary ingredients for each!

### **Goals and Outcomes Achieved:**

The overall increase in participation as compared to the past year with additional advertising was approximately 10%. Meaning that we distributed 10% more free samples on each of the given Jersey Fresh Days. The farmer vendors also enjoyed an increase in about 10% more sales of the respective commodities.

**Beneficiaries:**

Beneficiaries include the Market's farmer members who grow and sell all the commodities that were offered at each of the Jersey Fresh Days. Special events such as these bring in new customers, particularly young local families, with the potential of becoming long term customers. Secondly, our customers who had the opportunity to sample the various specialty crops that were offered FREE during each of the Jersey Fresh Days and hopefully went on to purchase and eat and enjoy Jersey Fresh Fruits and Vegetables.

**Lessons Learned:**

There is no doubt of the necessity to continue to increase consumer awareness of the benefit of eating and buying locally and our hope is that we can continue to do so by continuing this successful program.

**Contact Person:**

Jack & Marcia Ball

Co-managers of the Trenton Farmers Market

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**Additional Information:**

We are most appreciative for the Grant and all expenditures, check numbers, checks, copies of advertisements; cooking demonstration fliers and all pertinent documentation have been provided to our State Department of Agriculture. The Trenton Farmers Market was pleased to be able to expand upon this project's budget of \$9,300.00 and to contribute the Market's resources to expand the project budget to \$12,794.41. Lastly if we were to add the thousands of dollars in fruits and vegetables that were generously donated by our farmer members that the total would probably double!

## **SCBG Agreement # 12-25-B-1243**

Final Performance Report  
April 10, 2013

### **The Garden Club of New Jersey**

#### **Project Title:**

**“The Garden Club of New Jersey, Inc. Community Garden/Jersey Fresh/Jersey Grown Project”**

#### **Project Summary:**

Funds sought to:

- Begin a program to educate fellow garden club members and the public by fostering programs, workshops, and projects designed to teach, inspire, beautify, and enrich our local communities.
- Protect open space and farmland
- Create a healthier society by promoting gardening, preserving the environment, and encouraging residents to buy local and thereby support the Garden State Agricultural community by using “Jersey Fresh” and “Jersey Grown” products.

#### **Project Approach:**

Work Plan:

1. Our Committee issued mini grants of up to \$500.00 to *worthy* community garden projects throughout New Jersey at a time of municipality budget short falls, and economic distress with a goal toward generating new customers for the State’s agricultural sector and *expansion of* participation in the Garden Club of New Jersey efforts to promote *gardening and* New Jersey agriculture. The grant applications and directions were readily attainable on the Garden Club of New Jersey website: [www.gardenclubofnewjersey.com](http://www.gardenclubofnewjersey.com) under Community Gardens, with a reporting form due by September 29<sup>th</sup> of the award year with the project requesting a garden club sponsor for a method of insuring the project would be worked according to the grant requirements.
2. Our committee met on a monthly basis to administer the grants and plan events where we displayed our Community Gardens Education exhibit. We also sought to get the word out that our definition of community gardens included, not only, community gardens with garden plots growing fruits and vegetables which would be the “Jersey Fresh” aspect of our project, but public gardens that featured trees, shrubs, perennials and annuals representing the “Jersey Grown” aspect of our project. All of these falling under the specialty crops as outlined in our grant application, and as “spelled out” by the USDA.
3. One of the most rewarding outcomes of this project is the partnerships the Garden Club of New Jersey has formed with like-minded organizations and communities including: The New Jersey Department of Agriculture, the NJ Plants Trade Show, the New Jersey Nursery and Landscape Association, the New Jersey Agricultural Community including nurserymen, farmers, growers and garden centers, Hunterdon Land Trust Farmers Market, Somerset County 4H Fair, Rutgers Gardens, Warren County Community College, Municipalities including Raritan Township, Borough of

Springfield, Chester Township, Ocean Township, Borough of Keyport, Borough of Watchung, Borough of Medford, Borough of Rahway, Borough of Moorestown, Borough of Shrewsbury, Borough of Seaside Park, Tewksbury Township, Borough of Plainfield, Monmouth University, Lyons Club, Master Gardeners, Montgomery Township, New Jersey Blind Citizens Association, Borough of Frenchtown, Borough of Westfield, Borough of Lincroft, Boy Scout Troops and Girl Scout Troops, Youth Gardening Groups, and local food banks. Some of these partners donated materials, while others donated volunteers, matching monies and land to make our Garden State the best it can be.

**Goals and Outcomes Achieved;**

A total of 21 grants were awarded

Three New Community Gardens Created Plus More in the Works:

1. Raritan Township Community Garden began operation in May, 2012 with a garden erected behind the Raritan Township Municipal Building. It is the township's intent to see students from Robert Hunter School involved as well as scout troops and other non-profits. With that in mind, 8 of the 32 plots were reserved for non-profits with a Girl Scout Troop utilizing a plot to grow tomatoes, peppers and squash for the local food bank. A very successful project which generated a "bumper crop" of tomatoes especially. The school grew pumpkins and marigolds in their plot and plan on putting in a Square Foot Garden Bed in 2013. Meanwhile 20 community members had individual plots utilizing 16 of the remaining plots. The goal is to have all plots in use and garden members will do a "communal" garden growing pumpkins and squash in any vacant plots. This is a partnership between Raritan Township and District IV of the GCNJ.
2. Shrewsbury Community Garden Planted 60 plots, 4' x 30' partnering with Shrewsbury Garden Club, Master Gardeners of Monmouth County, Boy Scouts of America, local businesses and the Shrewsbury Community. The Mayor built a Community Garden sign with 30 volunteers making it all happen. Hundreds of pounds of produce were donated to the local food bank throughout the growing season.
3. Springfield Community Garden was a partnership of the Springfield Garden Club, Springfield Department of Parks & Recreation, Springfield Environmental Commission and the Springfield Department of Public Works. Springfield proposed and established a new community garden at the Township Pool site on a former handball court. They erected 14 wooden frames for raised beds and enough fencing to surround the plots. There was no charge and township residents and several classes of day campers (children ages 4-12 years old) were the beneficiaries. This is Springfield's 4<sup>th</sup> Community Garden, and gave the community a "shared gardening experience".
4. Chester Township Community Garden was not even a year old when we awarded a grant to them to help with their "new community garden" that included "scout work projects, education, and construction of edging along with benches, and a kiosk making this community garden with 115 plots @ 8' x 16' a delight to be involved in. Partners included the Chester Food Pantry, Chester Garden Club, Chester Environmental Commission and Chester Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts.

5. The GCNJ Community Gardens/Jersey Fresh/Jersey Grown Project also helped fund many existing community gardens in their expansion and improvement projects that are listed below. We also had many “in the works” that the continuation of this project has seen come to fruition in 2013. Details of these projects that have finally gotten under way will follow with the USDA SCBG 2013 grant awards. These awards have afforded the opportunity for “cash strapped” municipalities to foster gardening projects throughout the state and created whole new dynamic statewide, thanks to the USDA.

### Planting Achievements

The following lists the funded projects and some of their results;

1. Raritan Township Community Garden received \$500.00 and bought deer fencing for their 32 plot (each plot is 12' x 15') garden, 94' x 54', behind the Raritan Twp. Municipal Building across from Robert Hunter Elementary School. There were a total of 14 volunteers plus the School and a Girl Scout Troop with produce from the Girl Scout Troop going to the local food bank. The girls had a bumper crop of tomatoes, peppers and squash to donate to the Flemington Food Bank.
2. Monmouth University Student Community Garden was awarded \$500.00 for deer fencing with 30 communal plots and 34 individual plots. Twenty-four individual or organization plots (the YMCA) gardened at the site.
3. Chester Township Community Garden received a \$500.00 grant for Scout work projects: education, construction of edging, benches and a kiosk in the garden. Chester Community Garden had 25 volunteers *working* 115 plots @ 10' x 16'.
4. Terra Nova Garden Club for their award winning high school community garden in Edison received \$500.00 for gardening tools, plants and tomato supports and education. Twenty-five high school students and 6 volunteers from the G-Arden Unit of Terra Nova GC participated.
5. Homefirst Interfaith Housing & Family Services, Inc. in the Borough of Plainfield, NJ, received \$500.00 for their urban community garden *to purchase* plants and gardening tools. Their garden was 4000 sq. ft. with 12 plots in use initially. *Over* 200 volunteers and 100 people from Homefirst programs participated.
6. Garden Club RFD's Community Garden with the New Jersey Blind Citizens Association received \$500.00 for their main garden totaling 588 sq.ft plus 6 raised beds. There were 8 volunteers and Grow-bed liners, Grow Bed, and a plant protection tent were purchased to help protect the tender plants.
7. Springfield Community Garden received \$500.00 for their new community garden *used to purchase* materials to erect 14 wooden framed raised beds and fencing. The garden is 800 sq. *ft* and has 20 volunteers.
8. Moorestown Community Garden received \$500.00 for expansion of their “intergenerational community garden” and purchased compost, peat, salt hay, and materials to build 3 raised beds. There are 17 plots totaling 21,780 sq. ft. and 16 participants.

9. Oceanport Community Garden received \$500.00 for erecting 3 compost bins and expansion of their community garden. Money went to purchase building materials for bins and fencing, and 15 volunteers worked on this project.
10. Shrewsbury Community Garden received \$500.00 for a new Community garden and to purchase materials for raised beds, hose hangers, pelletized lime and organic fertilizer. Shrewsbury's garden was 100' x 70', numbered 60 plots with 40 users.
11. Royal Garden Club by the Bay in Perth Amboy received \$500.00 for the continuation of their community garden devoted to supplying fresh produce to Peter's Pantry, a local food bank. They have 27 volunteers in a 52 sq. garden with 8 plots. *Items purchased* included mulch, peat moss, weed block, plant food, rototiller rental and herbs.
12. Rahway Community Garden received \$500.00 for repairs to their community garden damaged by Hurricane Irene. Damage repair was done to perimeter fencing, fence posts, storage shed and to 10 of the 28 4' raised beds that comprise this garden. They also had to replace 50% of organic soil mix that needed to be replenished. Five volunteers worked on the needed repairs, and the number of user's total 40.
13. Roving Nature Center received \$500.00 for their "Garden Quilt Day" and community garden 50' x 50' with 15 volunteers, educating 100's of local children. Items purchased included vegetable seeds, flower seeds, starter kits and native plants.
14. Citizens for Sustainable & Resilient Coastal Communities received \$500.00 for refurbishing a municipal native plant garden in the Borough of Seaside Park that is 800 sq. ft. with maintenance done by 6 volunteers and 4 staff members. Purchases included plants, overnight prints and website hosting.
15. Pinelands Garden Club received \$500.00 for their EcoYouth Community Garden at Medford Leas, Medford, NJ. The plot is 20'x25' approximately 500 sq. and is part of a community garden with 25 other plots. Six adults and 12 children participated. Items purchased included seeds, plants, compost and gardening tools and books.

#### Education and Speaker Achievements

The following are Garden Education Events that also received grant monies under the grant application #12-25-B-1243.

16. Demarest Garden Club's *Davies Arboretum Project* received \$390.00 holding a "Planters to Plate" Garden Education Day at Davies Arboretum in Demarest, NJ on June 2, 2012. Purchases of plants, seeds, and planters went to educate 115 participants on the *methods and merits of edible* container gardening.
17. Keyport Garden Walk held on June 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> in Keyport, NJ received \$250.00 to help with providing speakers to this two day gardening education extravaganza. This project had over 100 volunteers and hosted several hundred visitors.
18. Garden Club of New Jersey partnering with Colonial Nursery received \$500.00 to present the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Garden Thyme Day at Colonial Nursery in Lincroft, NJ. On April 25, 2012. The event included 3 speakers on garden education, exhibitors,

vendors and tours. The money provided went towards speakers fees and \$225.00 was returned as unused to this committee.

19. Garden Club of Westfield partnering with Williams Nursery in Westfield, received \$500.00 for their garden education day on April 14, 2012 featuring “Jersey Fresh” and “Jersey Grown” aprons, t-shirts, hats and posters, garden education speakers, garden tours, exhibitors and vendors. Monies expended went towards brochures, programs, flyers and plants.
20. The Garden Club of New Jersey received \$500.00 towards the restoration of the original Blue Star Memorial Site in Plainfield, NJ. Plantings are planned after the restoration of the original sign which hasn’t been accomplished yet.
21. Warren County Community College received a grant of \$500.00 for the purchase of a refrigerator for their Floriculture Education Class which is the first in New Jersey.
22. The NJ Flower & Garden Show in Edison, NJ ran from February 16<sup>th</sup> to February 19, 2012 with over 25,000 people in attendance. We had Rutgers students erect a community garden featuring trees, shrubs and perennials representing “Jersey Grown” plant materials that would thrive in our climate, be more disease resistant and be accustomed to our soil conditions. We had “Jersey Grown” aprons that we printed ourselves, t-shirts and “Jersey Fresh” aprons, t-shirts, hats and posters among other materials to distribute as well as giving out our first major round of mini grant awards at a ceremony on the last day of the show. We awarded 18 of the 21 grants totaling \$8,640.00 of the \$9,300.00 USDA SCBG award #12-25-B-1243 that we had just received in January, 2012. We also were able to award over \$6,000.00 in plant material that was donated to the GCNJ by the NJ Plants Trade Show for us to distribute to 8 recipients to go to public gardens throughout New Jersey. These 8 recipients included: Borough of Springfield, Neshanic Garden Club for their public gardens in Hillsborough, Montgomery and Branchburg Townships, Shrewsbury Borough, Borough of Oceanport, Borough of North Plainfield, Raritan Township, Borough of Medford, and Borough of Moorestown.
23. We attended GCNJ State District meetings and the Annual GCNJ Meeting in June, 2012 with our guest speaker, NJDA Assistant Secretary Murray in attendance. We had our GCNJ Community Gardens/Jersey Fresh/Jersey Grown Project exhibit at each of these garden club venues with accompanying literature and materials including a bird feeder and bluebird house made with “Jersey Grown” wood and distributed by the NJ Audubon Society. September 15<sup>th</sup> found us at “Districts in the Gardens” showcasing our Community Garden Project to the GCNJ Club Presidents and their guests. The GCNJ has 8 Districts, 110 Garden Clubs and close to 5,000 members statewide. Our focus was to get the word out to all the clubs in the state so they, in turn, would get the word out to citizens in their community, partnering to beautify and enhance our public gardens throughout the state.

#### Publicity and Other Outcomes Achieved

The Garden Club of New Jersey Community Gardens/Jersey Fresh/Jersey Grown Project Committee partnered with Rutgers Gardens and Director Bruce Crawford to have his

students erect a community garden at the 2012 New Jersey Flower and Garden Show at the entrance to the GCNJ's Standard Flower Show "Movie Magic" which ran from February 16<sup>th</sup> to February 19<sup>th</sup>, 2012 at the NJ Convention Center in Edison. We had "Jersey Grown" aprons printed, along with "Jersey Fresh" aprons purchased from the NJDA, hats, t-shirts, posters all publicizing and extolling "Jersey Fresh" and "Jersey Grown". No grant monies went towards this initiative, and we had over 25,000 members of the public attend. We continued showcasing the Community Garden, "Jersey Fresh", "Jersey Grown" exhibit at venues throughout 2012 including Garden Club District meetings, Montgomery Earth Day, The GCNJ Annual Meeting where over 300 attended and NJDA Assistant Secretary Al Murray was an honored guest and speaker. We also had the exhibit at Hunterdon Land Trust's Farmers Market, Green Fest in Frenchtown, the 4-H Fair in Somerset County, District in the Gardens in East Brunswick, Pinelands Garden Club's "Jersey Grown" program where NJDA Secretary Murray and Gardener News Editor Tom Castronovo were guests and speakers along with GCNJ Chair Jeannie Geremia. Ms. Geremia also wrote several monthly articles in Gardener News as a contributing writer for the GCNJ, and Ms. Geremia was the guest on the Rutgers radio station, 88.7, The Gardening Hour on the Sudzin Country radio show on September 1<sup>st</sup>, 2012 giving voice to the GCNJ's finest project in decades.

### **Beneficiaries:**

#### The Garden Club of New Jersey and member clubs

The Garden Club of New Jersey Community Gardens/Jersey Fresh/Jersey Grown Project Committee has spent over \$11,000.00 on this most worthy project. The Garden Club of New Jersey is non-profit 501(C) 3 organization, and all monies from the \$9,300.00 USDA SCBG award # 12-25-B-1243 was expended as outlined in our grant application. The great news is that we are continuing on this project by monitoring the projects we have been able to assist and since the destruction wrought by Hurricane Sandy are looking to continue helping our Garden State recover through assisting even more projects now and in the future.

Municipalities, schools, food pantries, youth and other groups as outlined above, and New Jersey's nurserymen, growers, farmers, garden center proprietors, the New Jersey Department of Agriculture and the citizens of the Great State of New Jersey.

#### **The following are the beneficiaries of this project;**

*Municipalities directly benefitting from the mini-grants include:*

1. *Middletown Township*
2. *Borough of Plainfield*
3. *Raritan Township*
4. *Borough of Shrewsbury*
5. *Borough of Springfield*
6. *Chester Township*
7. *Hillsborough Township*
8. *Branchburg Township*
9. *Borough of Long Branch*
10. *Edison Township*
11. *Borough of Moorestown*
12. *Borough of Oceanport*

13. *Borough of Rahway*
14. *Borough of Perth Amboy*
15. *Borough of Seaside Park*
16. *Tewksbury Township*
17. *Borough of Medford*
18. *Borough of Demarest*
19. *Borough of Keyport*
20. *Borough of Lincroft*
21. *Borough of Westfield*
22. *Warren County*
23. *Somerset County*
24. *Borough of Frenchtown*
25. *Borough of Edison*
26. *Borough of East Brunswick*
27. *Borough of Cranford*
28. *Borough of Mountainside*
29. *Borough of Scotch Plains*
30. *Borough of Fanwood*
31. *Borough of Colonia*
32. *Borough of Watchung*
33. *Borough of Asbury Park*
34. *Borough of Eatontown*
35. *Borough of Flemington*

*Food Pantries receiving assistance from the mini-grants include:*

1. *Peter's Pantry of Perth Amboy*
2. *Shrewsbury local food banks*
3. *Rahway Food For Friends*
4. *Flemington Food Pantry*
5. *Lutheran Church Food Pantry*
6. *Ronald McDonald House*
7. *Long Branch Senior Center*
8. *Neptune Food Bank*
9. *Soup D'Shore*
10. *Medford Food Bank*
11. *Plainfield Needy*
12. *Chester Food Pantry*

*Schools and Youth Groups benefitting from the mini-grants include*

1. *Northern Valley Regional High School*
2. *Warren County Community College*
3. *Monmouth University*
4. *Keyport High School Civic Clubs*
5. *Robert Hunter Elementary School*
6. *Rutgers University*
7. *Oceanport Schools*
8. *Medford BCIT Vocational School Horticultural Students*
9. *Plainfield Summer Camp*
10. *Plainfield High School*

11. *Springfield Day Camp*
12. *8 Tewksbury Pre Schools*
13. *Temple Youth Organizations*
14. *Chester Boy Scouts*
15. *Chester Girl Scouts*
16. *Raritan Township Girl Scouts*
17. *Somerset County 4H organization*
18. *EcoYouth in Medford*
19. *G-Arden Youth in Edison*

*Organizations Benefitting and Partnering with the GCNJ include:*

1. *United Way*
2. *Department of Labor and Unemployment Workforce Development*
3. *Edison Wetlands Association*
4. *HomeFirst Family Success Center*
5. *Westfield Service League*
6. *Fanwood/Scotch Plains Service League*
7. *Rahway YMCA*
8. *Holy Trinity Catholic Church in Westfield*
9. *The Junior League of Elizabeth/Plainfield*
10. *St. Michael's Church in Cranford*
11. *New Jersey Blind Citizens Association*
12. *Barnegat Bay Partnership*
13. *Citizens for Sustainable & Resilient Coastal Communities*
14. *Mac Events*
15. *NJ Plants Trade Show*
16. *New Jersey Nursery and Landscape Association*
17. *New Jersey Department of Agriculture*
18. *Rutgers Gardens*
19. *Roving Nature Center*
20. *Medford Leas*
21. *Gardener News*

*Nurserymen, Farmers, Growers, Garden Center Proprietors benefitting from the mini-grants include:*

1. *Hionis Greenhouses*
2. *RCE Greenhouse Project*
3. *Cicconi Farms*
4. *Williams Nursery*
5. *Colonial Nursery*
6. *Rarefind Nursery*
7. *Pinelands Nursery*
8. *Dearborn Markets*
9. *Cape May Plant Materials Center*
10. *Jersey Shore Rose Society*
11. *Bruce Crawford, Director Rutgers Gardens*
12. *Sea Grass Design & Landscape*
13. *Gardener's Supply Company*

14. Home Depot
15. Walmart
16. Rutgers Snyder Farm
17. Benners Garden
18. Demarest Garden Centers
19. Kingwood Gardens
20. Four Seasons Greenery
21. Pleasant Run Nursery
22. Montgomery Farmers Market
23. Hunterdon Land Trust Farmers Market
24. Stony Brook Nursery
25. Sergeantsville Farmers Market
26. Stockton Farmers Market
27. Plant Detectives, Inc.
28. Morris County Farms
29. Donaldsons Farms
30. Sweet Valley Farms
31. Rutgers Nursery
32. Valley Brook Nursery
33. Garden Gate Nursery
34. Mendham Garden Center

*The Garden Club of New Jersey Community Gardens/Jersey Fresh/Jersey Grown Project has inspired many communities and organizations throughout New Jersey to embrace gardening in community gardens utilizing “Jersey Fresh” produce and public gardens utilizing “Jersey Grown” products thereby insuring a healthier lifestyle in its citizens and keeping our agricultural industry strong. We’re also insuring that our youth become involved in all aspects of gardening and carry that into adulthood. The reports we received from our mini-grant recipients with accompanying photos showed a huge array of specialty crops along with beaming faces of young and old alike seeing the results of their labor of love. The produce donated to food pantries and the knowledge to everyone involved that eating locally grown produce and buying local products not only makes us healthier in body and spirit, but keeps our state agricultural community healthy as well.*

### **Lessons Learned;**

We revised our grant application to make it easier for the committee and the grant applicants to generate more specific information.

Over-all this project has been and continues to be the best project the Garden Club of New Jersey has initiated since the great Blue Star Memorial Project begun in New Jersey in 1944 and is now a National Garden Club Project and is nationwide in scope. We hope to serve as a template to what partnering with our agricultural industry and communities can achieve throughout this great country of ours and follow First Lady Michelle Obama’s lead in helping our nation to become healthier and our children more engaged in eating vegetables, fruits and enjoying all nature has to offer by getting out there and gardening.

**\$10,395 TOTAL Project Expenditures**

**Contact Person:**

*Submitted by:*

Jeannie Geremia

GCNJ Community Garden Chair

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**Additional Information:**

Funding Expended:

**\$ 9,300 Federal Funds**

\$ 1,065 Garden Club New Jersey Funds

## **SCBG Agreement # 12-25-B-1243**

Final Performance Report  
March 31, 2014  
(Revised March 17, 2015)

### **New Jersey Christmas Tree Growers Association**

**Title:** “A project to support the marketing of New Jersey Christmas Trees”

#### **Project Summary:**

The public is often not aware of the location or even existence of local Christmas tree farms. Even when the public is aware of local Christmas tree farms, the media do not always portray local farms in a positive way. Funding from the Specialty Crop Block Grant was used to create a publicity campaign that would increase public awareness of locally grown trees. Increased production and distribution of the Choose and Cut Guide, along with a media advertising campaign, extoll the virtues of the fresh cut Christmas trees, identify where they can be purchased, and tell the ‘fresh cut’ story to families across New Jersey.

The New Jersey Christmas Tree Growers Association (NJCTGA) received a Specialty Crop Block Grant (SCBG) in 2012. Funding from this grant was used to create a video designed to increase public awareness of locally grown Christmas trees. Increased production and distribution of the Choose and Cut Guide was also a component of this grant. This report will discuss these activities in more detail.

#### **Project Approach:**

Every year the New Jersey Christmas Tree Growers Association (NJCTGA) publishes a Choose and Cut Christmas Tree Guide. This guide is available in print version and is also available online on the NJCTGA web site. Monies from the SCGB were used to pay for the printing of the 2012 guide and to increase the number of guides printed. To further promote the use of real trees, “Real Tree Facts” were added in available white space throughout the guide. These facts promote real trees as a renewable resource that support and protect the environment and discuss locally grown Christmas trees.

For 2011, 13,000 Choose and Cut guides were printed and for 2012, 13,500 guides were printed and distributed throughout New Jersey. Christmas tree displays and contests were held at several New Jersey County Fairs in 2012 including Hunterdon County, Sussex County and Warren County and the guides were actively distributed at these fairs. Over 7,000 guides were distributed during 2012 at New Jersey county fairs. An ad was run in the 2012 and 2013 Hunterdon County Fair Booklet concerning real Christmas trees and listed the NJCTGA web site. These ads increased public awareness of locally grown Christmas trees and were a great compliment to the Christmas tree display at the Hunterdon County Fair. Guides were also mailed to each Christmas tree farm featured in the guide for distribution to establishments in the vicinity of the farm. A packet of guides was sent to each Cooperative Extension Office for distribution.

Approximately one third of the grant funds were spent on the publication of the 2012 Choose and Cut Guide. The remaining grant funds were used in the creation of a YouTube video promoting locally grown Christmas trees. The NJCTGA Directors decided to use a design

company to produce the video since none of the members had the expertise to design or produce a video. Several companies were contacted and Graphic Matter, Inc was selected to produce the video. The objectives of the video were:

- Create a video designed to inform site visitors about the “real tree” experience and promote purchasing a real tree vs. artificial tree. The video will reside on YouTube and was to be embedded in the NJCTGA website.
- The video was to be “generic” to the New Jersey Christmas tree industry. It would be a useful marketing tool for the NJCTGA and for all New Jersey Christmas tree farms and not promote any specific tree farm (similar to the “Got Milk” or “the other white meat” advertising campaigns).
- The video would be viewable on mobile devices.
- The video was to be completed and uploaded to the NJCTGA website during the fall of 2013 so that site visitors could view the video.

Graphic Matters designed and produced a six minute video titled, “*Douglas Fir, The Real New Jersey Christmas Tree Story.*” The video was posted in October, 2013 on the home page of the NJCTGA website, [www.njchristmastrees.org](http://www.njchristmastrees.org) This video used an animated Christmas tree named Douglas to tell the story of how Christmas trees are grown from seed to harvestable trees plus the video touched on a number of topics including Christmas tree safety, types of trees, and tree shaping (shearing).

#### **Goals and Outcomes Achieved:**

The amount of traffic on the NJCTGA website was used to determine the effect of the Choose and Cut Guide and the video. Data was available from December 2011 through December 2013. The number of unique visitors to the website in December 2011 was 369 while the number of unique visitors to the website in December 2012 was 4002. This was over a tenfold increase in visits to the NJCTGA website during December. The number of unique visitors to the website in December 2013 was 6738. This was almost a 70% increase in unique visitors to the website during December in 2012 compared to December 2013.

The data for the number of hits to the website was similar to data for the number of unique visitors to the website. The number of hits to the website in December 2011 was 9,030 while the number of hits to the website in December 2012 was 104,847. This was over a tenfold increase in hits to the NJCTGA website during December in 2012 compared to 2011. The number of hits to the website in December 2013 was 149,760. This was over a 40% increase in hits to the website during December 2013 as compared to December 2012.

Several NJCTGA members reported that customers mentioned the video during visits to the farm to select their Christmas tree. Members will be encouraged to add the video to their farm websites to assist with marketing the “real tree” experience.

In the grant proposal, a member survey was to be conducted to get member feedback on this marketing campaign. A member survey was not done since it was difficult for members to determine quantitatively how their business was affected by the survey. The web traffic count was used to determine the success of the marketing campaign since the data was measureable and quantitative.

The goal of this grant was to encourage Christmas tree buyers to purchase a locally grown real Christmas tree. Both the video and the Choose and Cut Guide portrayed local Christmas tree farms in a positive way and encouraged customers to buy locally grown real trees.

**Beneficiaries:**

There are approximately 150 Christmas tree growers that belong to the NJ Christmas Tree Growers Association (NJCTGA) and an estimated 100 growers that do not belong. All New Jersey Christmas tree growers will benefit from increased public awareness of New Jersey grown Christmas trees. In 2010, 92 farms advertised in the Choose and Cut Guide and increased distribution of the Guide benefited all growers.

**Lessons Learned**

The public is eager to learn about the chose and cut a fresh tree experience and growers. The public is very visually oriented and a video is good marketing tool as long as it can be viewed on multiple electronic devices, including cell phones, computers, tablets, etc. Unfortunately the NJ Christmas Tree Growers Association did not have a member with the expertise to develop a video and an outside firm was used. Any organization that decides to develop a video or marketing campaign needs to be realistic about the ability and expertise of members. If members do not have the expertise to develop a video (or marketing task) then an outside firm will need to be identified and hired. Finding, hiring and working with the outside firm is time consuming. Luckily one of our members stepped forward and worked closely with the firm that produced the video. Any small organization considering developing a video must have a person willing to spend hours working with the outside firm.

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## **SCBG Agreement # 12-25-B-1243**

Atlantic County Board of Agriculture  
Final Performance Report  
December 29, 2014  
(Revised March 9, 2015)

### **PROJECT TITLE**

**“Educating the Public about Agriculture in Atlantic County Through Promotional Displays and Advertising”**

### **PROJECT SUMMARY**

The Atlantic County Board of Agriculture (ACBA) has been an energetic and enthusiastic promoter of local agricultural interests at local, state and national levels. Their marketing efforts are designed to educate the public about the diverse selections of fresh produce and nursery crops grown on Atlantic County farms. This project will continue to increase the public’s awareness and understanding of the economic and non-economic benefits of a strong and viable agriculture industry in the county, as well as promote the products grown here. The Specialty Crop Block Grant (SCBG) funds will be used to purchase and/or build a portable farm market-type display unit to be stocked with both fresh produce in season and promotional/educational videos and materials to hand out at annual public functions such as the Atlantic County 4H Fair, ACUA’s Earth Day Celebration, Atlantic City Fancy Foods Show, community farmers’ markets and other community events. Extra SCBG funds were to be used to update the ‘Finding Jersey Fresh’ electronic navigator app developed by County Agricultural Agent Richard VanVranken. This entire project was coordinated by VanVranken, in cooperation with the ACBA Executive Committee.

### **Project Purpose:**

The Atlantic County Board of Agriculture is a farmer-member advisory board for Rutgers Cooperative Extension of Atlantic County, the State Board of Agriculture, and the New Jersey Farm Bureau. The ACBA’s approximately thirty member Executive Board represents the entire farming community in providing input on issues affecting the viability of agriculture in the county. The ACBA provides both promotional and educational support to help increase the public’s awareness and understanding of the economic and non-economic benefits of a strong and viable agriculture industry in Atlantic County, NJ, as well as promote the availability of the products grown on Atlantic County farms.

Each year, ACBA members donate produce and ornamental crop products to both the Atlantic County 4H Fair and to a farm market stand at the fair run by volunteers of the Rutgers Cooperative Extension Master Gardener (RCE-MG) program to assist fund raising efforts for fair projects and/or the RCE-MG program. In addition to making farm fresh produce available to fair goers, the display includes information about farming in Atlantic County and other educational Extension publications about specialty crop production. Through this effort, the ACBA increases the awareness of the availability of fresh local agricultural products to both consumers and local restaurants/food purveyors, including the Atlantic City casino industry with the potential of hundreds of thousands in purchases from local farms.

Noting that the Atlantic County fairgrounds lacked adequate cold storage facilities to maintain freshness and quality of donated produce for the 3 days of the event, the ACBA proposed to use SCBG funds to purchase/construct a portable farm market-type display unit that can be stocked with both fresh produce in season as well as promotional/educational videos and materials about Atlantic County's specialty crops farm industry to view/distribute at annual public functions. A key component of the mobile market display would be the conversion of the interior into a cold storage unit to address the lack of such at the fair. However, this portable unit will also allow the ACBA to expand their promotional efforts beyond just the Atlantic County Fair to numerous other community events such as the Atlantic County Utilities Authority's Earth Day Celebration, the Atlantic City Fancy Foods Show, several community farmers' markets, and other venues in order to enhance the competitiveness of Atlantic County's specialty crops.

While additional SCBG funds were intended for updating and distributing agent VanVranken's 'Finding Jersey Fresh' electronic navigator app, the mobile market conversion cost more than originally budgeted so there were no funds to pursue the app update. Farm markets throughout the state are invaluable outlets selling Atlantic County's specialty crops directly to Garden State consumers, but this part of the proposed project needed to be postponed until additional funding is secured.

When submitted, no other funding had ever been sought for this proposal. Since that time, a larger proposal to greatly expand the type and management of the ACBA's marketing programs was submitted to the USDA's Farmers Market Promotion Program, but that was not funded.

#### PROJECT APPROACH

Briefly summarize activities and tasks performed during the entire grant period. Whenever possible, describe the work accomplished in both quantitative and qualitative terms. Specifically, discuss the tasks provided in the *Work Plan* of the approved project proposal. Include the significant results, accomplishments, conclusions and recommendations. Include favorable or unusual developments.

This proposal was intended to encompass two concurrent projects.

- 1) Creation of a mobile market/cooler promotional and educational display unit;
- 2) Updating and distribution of the 'Finding Jersey Fresh' POI database.

#### Mobile Market/Cooler

After evaluating several alternatives for creating/purchasing a mobile market and/or cooling unit, it was determined that the most cost effective means of achieving the desired outcome would be to purchase a utility box trailer and reconstruct it to meet our requirements. That decision delayed the initiation of the project until a trailer was purchased in August 2013. The conversion design was developed over the winter into 2014. The conversion of the trailer into a mobile market with a working walk-in cooler (without graphics) was completed in the summer of 2014 in time to use as a promotional cold storage unit for the fund-raising Jersey Fresh market display at the 2014 Atlantic County Fair as intended.

The graphic design was finalized shortly after the initial use at the County Fair and graphics were applied to the exterior of the trailer in late October. At that time, it was too late for use

at any market events. However, the ACBA is negotiating to display the mobile market/cooler at the 2015 New Jersey Agricultural Convention in Atlantic City in February. This may be limited by the capacity of the convention facility to be able to move the market into an appropriate display area. Otherwise, the market will be put to full use next spring/summer at farmers' markets and educational/promotional events throughout Atlantic County, the surrounding region and the entire state.

#### 'Finding Jersey Fresh' POI database update

This part of the proposal was secondary to the market/cooler development if there were left over funds. As it became clearer that the trailer conversion would cost more than the grant funds received, and coupled with the advent of smartphones becoming reliable alternatives to stand alone navigators, further development of the 'Finding Jersey Fresh' POI database was put on hold. During this time, some effort was spent on determining if smartphones would be compatible with the POI database, but more time and additional funding will be required to conduct intended data verification and then promote the product to the public.

Throughout the spring, summer and fall seasons, the market display will be set up at public venues around the county, averaging at least one site per month. In the late fall/early winter of 2012, this first season will be evaluated to determine its impact and any needs for adjustment for subsequent years. Primary responsibility, management and evaluation of this project will be by Agent VanVranken in cooperation with the ACBA Executive Committee which meets monthly. ACBA volunteers and RCE-AC Master Gardener volunteers will man the display at various events throughout the year.

- 1) If the overall scope of the project benefitted commodities other than specialty crops, indicate how project staff ensured that funds were used to solely enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops.

Only specialty crops producers benefit from this marketing project. Atlantic County has become the second largest agricultural county in the Garden State producing crops and livestock worth \$128.3 million annually. 98% of that is attributed to production of high-value specialty horticultural crops. Atlantic County's 499 farms produced crops on a total of 30,372 acres. The County's and State's #1 crop of blueberries is concentrated on nearly 7000 acres in Hammonton, Mullica, Hamilton and Galloway Townships and contributes \$83.2 million (1st in NJ, 8th in US) to the local farm economy. Nursery, sod and greenhouse crops contribute another \$17.5 million. Atlantic County vegetable farmers grow more than 100 types of vegetables (3rd in NJ, 94th in the US) and fresh herbs (1st in NJ, 6th in the US -- overall NJ is 3rd in production of fresh herbs behind FL and NC). Combined, these crops contribute nearly \$25 million annually to local farm income and help sustain 6,000 acres of productive farmland. These eligible specialty crops are the sole focus of this promotional program funded through the SCBGP-FB as they are highlighted in the graphics wrapping the entire mobile market.

The Atlantic County Board of Agriculture Executive Committee supplied additional funding to complete this project, and individual members contributed fresh produce for displays and fund-raising sales. Rutgers Cooperative Extension of Atlantic County Agricultural Agent and support staff provided technical input for the mobile market/cooler conversion and completed the reconstruction, as well as supplying photographs and direction for the graphic design.

## GOALS AND OUTCOMES ACHIEVED

- 1) Describe the activities that were completed in order to achieve the performance goals and measurable outcomes identified in the approved project proposal or subsequent amendments.

A 6ft by 12ft utility/cargo trailer was purchased to convert into a portable farm market display, with cold storage and integrated produce displays.

Supplies and accessories were purchased beginning in April 2014 and the conversion/reconstruction was completed in early August with part-time assistance from a temp employee working for RCE-Atlantic. Upon completion of the conversion, the market's first use was for demonstration Atlantic County 4H Fair where it displayed fresh fruits and vegetables, and stored excess produce for 3 days in the cooler.

At that time, trailer dimensions and a supply of photographs depicting various Atlantic County agricultural scenes were supplied to a graphics company who developed several drafts in consultation with the ACBA under the supervision of VanVranken. The final draft was approved and applied to the trailer in early October.

## BENEFICIARIES

- 1) Provide a description of the groups and other operations that benefited from the completion of this project's accomplishments.

There should be three levels of beneficiaries of this project:

- Atlantic County is now the second largest agricultural county in New Jersey according to the 2007 Agricultural Census. While many factors contribute to that positioning, a significant issue is that the New Jersey Pinelands Comprehensive Management Plan restricted most of the counties agricultural lands to farming. Since the farmer land owners are left with no alternatives but to farm the ground, it is imperative to maintain a strong and viable agricultural industry in the County. Atlantic County farmers have turned to high-value specialty crops to maintain viable farming operations and all will benefit from greater public awareness of the importance of the industry, both in providing a tremendous selection of farm fresh products and in maintaining vast areas of open space contributing to the quality of life for residents.
- Atlantic County residents benefit from understanding the contributions of agriculture to their quality of life both in enjoyment of the farmscape and the enjoyment of nutritious farm fresh products.
- Visitors to Atlantic County benefit by being able to easily find farm market outlets to purchase Jersey Fresh foods, as well as enjoy them prepared by many local restaurants now seeking out locally grown products for their menus.

- 2) Clearly state the number of beneficiaries affected by the project's accomplishments and/or the potential economic impact of the project.

### ○ Direct Benefits to Farmers/Vendors

- Atlantic County's 499 specialty crop farmers who produce nearly \$130 million of produce each year will experience increased positive attitudes towards and awareness of local agriculture and see the sales of their diversified specialty crop farm products continue to grow. The intention

is to continue developing a promotional website and survey tools to monitor consumer responses after observing the mobile market trailer to measure their reactions to the display, their attitudes towards local agriculture, and their intentions to or actual purchases of Atlantic County specialty crops as a result of seeing the display. The website and survey will be completed before the completed trailer is used during the 2015 marketing season.

- The goal of creating a 25% increase in purchases of local farm products found via the 'Finding Jersey Fresh' POI navigator database will be difficult to verify, but consumer responses will give an indication of potential impact. As this part of the project was not completed due to budget constraints and technology advances, at this time there is no intention to try to measure any impacts of the navigator tool.
- While there will be no evaluation of the navigator tool, the 'Finding Jersey Fresh' website will be utilized as the promotional site for the ACBA specialty crops project, and will allow administration of the voluntary surveys/evaluation of the overall promotional effort via the mobile market.

### LESSONS LEARNED

- 1) Offer insights into the lessons learned by the project staff as a result of completing this project. This section is meant to illustrate the positive and negative results and conclusions for the project.
  - a. Trailer conversion into an insulated cooler box is a relatively easy project for someone with basic carpentry skills.
  - b. CoolBot unit coupled with an inexpensive room-sized window air conditioning unit is a little more challenging to install in a trailer, requiring metal cutting and building of a support frame. However, completing the wiring and operation of the unit is easy following the simple instructions included with the CoolBot unit.
  - c. Relatively new graphics wrapping technologies allow a wide range of possibilities to illustrate ideas using an entire vehicle as a portable, highly visible canvas.
- 2) Describe unexpected outcomes or results that were an effect of implementing this project.
  - a. The trailer conversion took 2-3 people working almost full time for nearly a month to complete. That time and effort need to be factored into the timeline for completing such an endeavor.
  - b. Cost of trailer conversion, including extra labor, was more than anticipated, but still reasonable for the expected outcome.
- 3) If goals or outcome measures were not achieved, identify and share the lessons learned to help others expedite problem-solving.
  - a. Don't overcommit to too many concurrent projects.
  - b. Begin as soon as funding is made available and follow the proposed timeline.
  - c. Start brainstorming and gathering photos for graphic elements early in the development phase so that doesn't delay implementation after the trailer conversion is completed.
- 4) Lessons learned should draw on positive experiences (i.e., good ideas that improve project efficiency or save money) and negative experiences (i.e., lessons learned

about what did not go well and what needs to be changed).

- a. Employ or subcontract for the right skills, i.e. hire laborers for construction work, IT specialists for app development, and designers for graphics work.
- b. Secure back up funding for higher than budgeted expenses.
- c. A graphic wrap photo collage can tell a great story, and coupled with technology (smart devices accessing websites via QR code scanning), can add unlimited resources providing more facts, details, and stories about local farms.
- d. This is a highly visible and attractive display and promotional unit which should be very popular at public events, however, plan for challenging space constraints – too big for some venues; too heavy to move easily by hand without the tow vehicle.

### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The construction/conversion of the utility trailer into a mobile market/cooler, as illustrated in the following photos, will be featured in a web post on the Rutgers Cooperative Extension “Sustaining Farming on the Urban Fringe” website.



A basic 6' x 12' box utility trailer prior to conversion.



A standard 2x4 frame was built of pressure treated lumber to cover the entire floor, as well as about 2/3 of the walls, front, and ceiling to create the cooler box. All areas between the studs were filled with 3½” of aluminum-backed, Styrofoam insulation and then covered with ½” plywood.



The front end wall cut-out to hold the air conditioning unit.



Inner doors partitioning the cooler from storage area.



The CoolBot unit overrides the thermostat of a household window AC unit keeping it running until reaching the temperature selected on the CoolBot, much below the limits of the AC unit's own thermostat.



The market display side of the trailer in use before graphics were applied.



Left side graphics 'tell the story' of Atlantic County's diversified specialty crop agriculture, while the rear panels highlight blueberry production from the field harvest through cleaning and packaging, to the crates ready for shipping. Colorful flowers and vegetables vie for attention.



The 'market' side panel and front illustrate field and high tunnel production of specialty vegetables and herbs.

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## **SCBG Agreement # 12-25-B-1243**

Final Performance Report  
June 24, 2014

### **Middlesex County Board of Agriculture**

#### **Project Title:**

“A project to promote Middlesex County Agriculture”

#### **Project Summary:**

To provide means of increasing sales of Middlesex County farms that market specialty crops directly to the public at a time the competition for consumer dollars is extremely tight.

Marketing trends are constantly changing. In order to keep up with those changes, marketing philosophies and techniques need to change as well. One of the current trends is a renewed awareness of buying local. This is particularly true in agriculture marketing. High energy and gas prices, emphasis on reducing the carbon footprint, and going green are all considerations that influence today's consumer. A savvy marketer will use these points to focus his advertising efforts. Getting his information to the public so that they can patronize their local market is of vital importance.

The purpose of this project was to connect the local farm markets and other growers offering specialty crops within Middlesex County with the consuming public. Often the public is unaware that these markets exist as they may be in located more rural areas of the County away from the population centers. This project sought to make the public aware of where to purchase fresh New Jersey agricultural products close to home. This was an opportunity for the actual producer to better acquaint the public with what they have to offer and what benefits their products have over mass marketers.

We only solicited for and included in the brochure, those farms that produced specialty crops. All the marketers included in the brochure sell at the retail level. Producers of commodity crops were not solicited to be included in the brochure. In our county, none of the commodity producers sell at the retail level. Therefore, all of the grant money dedicated for this project was used solely to promote specialty crops and no other crops.

Some additional money was provided by the Middlesex County Board of Agriculture in order to complete the project.

A hard copy of the brochure has been sent to the USDA.

#### **Project Approach:**

We contacted all direct marketers of specialty crop producers within the county and offered them the opportunity to participate in this project. We then created a brochure listing all the interested farms and what they were marketing with a map showing exactly where each farm is located. We partnered with the Middlesex County Extension office and its agricultural agents to promote and produce the brochure.

We also design and had built a portable kiosk promoting specialty crops produced throughout the county and how to access those farms.

Both portions of this project were limited to farms producing and marketing specialty crops.

### **Goals and Outcomes Achieved:**

The goal of this project was to increase the profitability of Middlesex County farmers that market directly to the consumer by providing the consumer information where they could purchase the specialty crop products they were seeking within the local confines of the county.

Many of the participating farms have reported increased interest in their products and their operations. The result was an increase in sales for many of these farms.

Forty-one specialty crop producers or producer groups participated in the project. All forty-one are listed in the brochure.

To this point about 2400 brochures have been distributed to potential consumers, who are the general public. The brochures were distributed at the county fair, the county extension office, at local county farm stands, local nurseries and garden centers, and local county farm tests.

Nearly all or about 94% of the participants felt they had increased sales as a result being listed in the brochure.

Most of the vendors felt that their sales increased about 9% as a direct result of the brochure. Many admitted they did not take tracking their sales as seriously as they should have and as a result, their figures are an estimate. Naturally some vendors had significantly higher increases. Conversely those vendors whose product line was very limited did not fare as well.

### **Beneficiaries:**

The beneficiaries of this project were both the producer and the consumer. The farm specialty crop producers experienced increase interest and sales of their products. The consumer benefited by finding farm fresh and locally produced products they could purchase closer to home at a lesser cost resulting in financial savings and a smaller carbon footprint.

All but one of the vendors felt they experienced sales growth or increase consumer visibility.

It is difficult to estimate how many people actually benefited from the brochures. A case can be made that anyone who purchased product as a result of the brochure benefited as they purchased nutritious farm fresh fruit and vegetables, or other farm products.

### **Lessons Learned:**

We found it to be more difficult than expected to gather the required information to create the brochure as a few farmers were hesitant to offer information about their operation that would be listed in the same venue as their competitors. It is interesting to note that some those same farmers eventually realized that interacting with the competition by means of the brochure actually benefited all of those who listed and in many cases, provided backup for the competitors.

The one for all and all for one approach of both the kiosk and brochure seems to have improved many of the relationships among the specialty crop producers.

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