

Wasatch Front Community Supported Agriculture Collective: Seeking Local Solutions to Food Production

Great Salt Lake Resource, Conservation and Development (RC&D) Council, Inc. of Salt Lake City, UT received \$43,340 to fund a promotional project that targeted small producers allowing them to sell directly to the public via community supported agriculture (CSA); and procure season-extending production equipment for use by participating farmers. Funds were used to purchase advertising, signage, and brochures; portable hoop-houses and irrigation equipment; and pay for packaging and labeling.

Final Report

June 7, 2010
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“Wasatch Front Community Supported Agriculture Collective: Seeking Local Solutions to Food Production”, Moving toward CSA Utah.

FMPP UT-190-2008
Agreement: 12-25-G-0755

Dear Mrs. Humphrey:

The Great Salt Lake RC&D Council has completed the Farmers Market Promotion Program Grant.

Activities and Milestones.

1. For the last two years, the Great Salt Lake RC&D (GSL RC&D) Council has worked diligently with like-minded partners to promote and build the capacity of Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) along the Wasatch Front with almost no financial resources. The Farmers Market Promotion Program Grant has given the GSL RC&D the needed funds to significantly raise awareness of the general public in Utah about CSA, as well as educate and encourage new and existing farmers about this creative marketing opportunity.
2. These funds made possible to take advantage of opportunities as they presented themselves, including contributing to the Great Salt Lake People’s Garden initiative and the Salt Lake County’s Urban Farming effort. In addition, the energy created from this grant and CSA Utah has evolved into
3. The GSL RC&D and CSA Utah were able to significantly increase the number of CSAs in Utah from five in 2008 to over 25 in 2010.
4. The creation of CSA Utah has led to other important possibilities to the local food production and consumption in Utah, including facilitating the Salt Lake County Urban Farming effort that has made vacant county-owned land available for commercial farming operations. In addition, the Council has partnered with Wasatch Community Gardens to explore the possibility of a Great Salt Lake People’s Garden modeled after the garden at the White House. Further, new energy has been created to move towards the establishment of a new and beginning farmer/rancher program in Utah, FarmLink:Utah.

Problems and Delays.

1. Locating and retaining a committed webmaster has proven to be an unanticipated obstacle although it has not created a significant negative impact to the delivery of the program, effectiveness of services, or notable detriment to partners, customers or farmers. A potential work around includes enlisting a motivated and skilled volunteer to convert the software to an open source code and maintain the website.
2. The GSL RC&D debated its role in acting as an online fiduciary between shareholders and CSA farms. It was decided that each CSA should be responsible

for handling the financial arrangements with their respective customers, although some lack the capacity to handle on technological resources. The discussion for EBT is ongoing and of concern to CSA farmers, shareholders and partners.

3. Accessing television media has been a financial challenge that has thus far proven to be elusive. The GSL RC&D has decided that the return on investment is not prudent at this time and budget. However, additional funding sources and new related projects and partnerships are being pursued to try and make this a reality.

Future Project Plans.

1. Due to the success of this effort, additional follow-up funding is being pursued.
2. Such additional needs will include a more professional website with increased functionality that will allow both consumers and producers to provide feedback in a timely and meaningful manner. In addition, it is anticipated that a interactive map will soon be uploaded that will show CSA delivery days, times and locations.
3. Collaborating with committed partners and dedicated volunteers to spread the CSA message in Utah in new and effective ways.
4. The efforts of CSA Utah have made it clear that although the demand side (consumption) may be sensitive to economic downturns, in general there is still an unmet need. However, it has also become apparent that there is a significant need for new and beginning farmers that are willing to pursue this somewhat nontraditional marketing tool.

Funding To Date.

1. Funds for marketing and outreach: \$24,396
2. Funds for indirect costs: \$3,940
3. Funds for supplies and travel: \$6,380
4. Funds for equipment: \$7,167
5. Matching funds: \$19,532

Additional information.

1. Created www.csautah.org
2. Published CSA Utah story in Rural Connections, November 2009 (<http://wrdc.usu.edu/htm/newsletters>), attached page 33.
3. Presentation at National Small Farms Conference in Springfield, IL on September 16, 2009, see attached
4. Two open houses in Salt Lake City and one in Logan, Utah to introduce consumers to the CSA concept, give CSA farmers an audience to communicate with about their programs, and encourage people to take direct grassroots action and invest in local farms as shareholders.
5. Created CSA Utah logo and display ads, attached.
6. Created CSA Utah slogan: Rooted in Your Community, Harvested for Your Table.
7. Produces Public Service Announcements and underwriting messages on four local radio stations, mp3 files attached.

8. Created CSA Utah brochures, banners and signs, including Spanish translations of CSA Utah brochure.
9. Purchased display ads in numerous publications, including the Deseret News, Salt Lake Tribune and subsidiaries, City Weekly, QNews and QPages, Salt Lake ReDirect Guide, El Semanal, the Catalyst, and the Provo Herald with combined readership in the millions.
10. Created videos of three CSA farms: Bell Organics, Zoe's Garden, and Late Bloomin' Heirlooms.
11. CSA Utah had stories published in the Salt Lake Tribune, Deseret News, Herald Journal, the Daily Herald and other newspapers and publications with hundreds of thousands of prints in circulation.
12. Provided highly leveraged funds for CSA-related equipment for farmers. This provided experienced and novice farmers to transition to CSA. The cost-share was 3 to 1 or greater.
13. Collaborated with the Viking Cooking School to hold a class for shareholders to creatively incorporate the seasonal variability of CSA into their weekly menus.
14. Attended several community events to inform the public about CSA, how they can participate and why it is important. A partial list includes: farmers markets, garden festivals, school fairs, community events, panels, workshops and more.
15. Coordinated and facilitated Integrated Pest Management workshops and CSA farm tour.
16. Facilitated a business planning session for CSA farmers at the 2009 Utah Diversified Agriculture Conference and provided a partial reimbursement to those that travelled and participated in the session and conference.

From the first 6 months:

Activities include:

- Scheduling a CSA open house at the Salt Lake City Downtown Library for March 24th
- Met with several CSA farmers to strategize how to educate both new shareholders and farmers to offer a CSA on February 10th
- Equipment needs were reviewed and commitments made by CSA farmers
- Drafted and submitted a press release about the new effort: CSA Utah
- Made partners and agencies aware of this effort and enlisted them to educate their patrons
- Drafted marketing strategy to implement the grant, leverage funds and contacts
- Completed flyer to advertise open house
- Made financial commitments for advertising in ReDirect Guide, El Semanal (Hispanic newspaper), Catalyst (Monthly magazine), Q Salt Lake, several local radio stations, etc.
- Made financial commitment with graphic designer and completed logo
- Made financial commitment with website designer and drafted website, www.csautah.org
- Made financial commitment to CSA farmers to reimburse specific expenses pertaining to Utah Diversified Agriculture Conference and Business Plan training workshop February 25-27

- Completed and submitted request for advance (SF 270), updated spreadsheet, and cover letter
- Considering request for grant extension to spread funds and effort over 2 seasons, to March or April 2010
- We anticipate that the new website will be fully functional and customers will be able to purchase shares online, learn about CSA, share with others that may not be able to afford a CSA share, contribute to the project and the GSL RC&D and connect with others interested in CSA
- Attended and made presentation about CSA Utah at National Small Farm Conference in Springfield, IL on September 16, 2009.
- Submitted article for Western Rural Development Center's "Rural Connections" which has been accepted for publication in the November 2009 issue.
- Continue to educate and recruit farmers for CSA in Utah.
- Approaching 4,000 hits on www.csautah.org

Challenges include:

- Current economic downturn and the effects to CSA operations in Utah when consumers have less discretionary funds
- Communicating, educating and reaching out to non-native speakers, especially the Spanish speaking population. The GSL RC&D is pursuing translation services of the website, however budgetary realities may not allow this to be implemented.
- Increasing participation in CSA Utah by low-income consumers has been an expected challenge. Increasing the educational component to CSA participants about the importance for all consumers to eat a local and healthful diet is needed along with opportunities for more prosperous individuals to donate towards that end.

Future Project plans include:

- Explore new and creative methods of reaching out to traditional and non-traditional audiences throughout the state by using a variety of mediums, such as newspapers, email, events, websites, radio, magazines, and hopefully TV.

Funding to date:

- Total \$30,700 for
- \$1,000 logo
- \$3,000 website design
- \$4,000 radio spots on 4 stations
- \$ 800 for the ReDirect Guide
- \$1,000 for Catalyst
- \$3,000 for a mix of Hispanic, alternative, and mainstream print ads
- \$7,400 for equipment for the upcoming growing season
- \$2,000 for indirect costs
- \$1,000 for reimbursement for farmers to learn the principles of business planning at the Utah Diversified Agriculture Conference on February 25-27, 2009

\$7,500 for 1,000 reusable shopping bags for CSA shareholders and promotional purposes with CSA Utah logo and message, banner, table and chairs, farmers market registration fee, and other packaging, labeling and outreach materials.

Additional information includes:

- See attached materials
- Visit www.csautah.org for videos, reusable bags, logo, PSA, farmer sites, etc.

