

## **Coordination and Development of a Wisconsin Statewide Farmers' Market Association & New Electronic Transfer (EBT) Program**

The **Waukesha County U.W. Extension** of Waukesha, Wisconsin received \$35,296 to create a statewide farmers market managers' association, and develop a website for promoting farmers markets that serves as a networking and resource site for market managers.

[Final Report FY09](#)

## **Final Performance Report**

Date: October 13, 2011

Recipient Name: Waukesha County University of Wisconsin Extension

Title of Project: Coordination & Development of a Wisconsin Farmers Market Association

Grant Number: 12-25-G-0989

Location: Wisconsin

### **Project Summary**

Through research conducted in Southeast Wisconsin by the University of Wisconsin Cooperative Extension educators during the 2006 and 2007 market season, it was determined that the most critical a component of farmers' market success was the quality of the manager. There are three primary hurdles in getting managers to this stage. First is that less than half of market managers are paid. Most are volunteers or vendors serving in the role of manager. Second, of those managers that are paid, most receive less than \$12 an hour for their labor. The third hurdle is that most farmers markets' in Wisconsin have managers with less than 5 years of experience. If farmers' market managers that were active, organized and knowledgeable created markets that were more profitable, how can we help managers get there without burning out? The answer is by giving them help.

The goal of this grant is to assist managers in making their markets successful, without causing them to be overwhelmed. With over 200 markets, big and small, rural and urban, we have a vast array of market manager knowledge and resources in Wisconsin. The challenge is sharing them.

The desire for a farmers' market association, like most farmers markets' in Wisconsin has risen organically from managers. In the past four years, the University of Wisconsin Cooperative Extension has brought together managers from around the state for educational workshops, a study tour and a short course. In many evaluations, managers cited the most valuable aspect of the event to be the opportunity to network with other market managers. More and more managers from around the state have expressed an interest in forming an association in order to share their knowledge and ideas with each other.

It is important that the market managers drive this process. It is the intention of UW-Extension simply to facilitate the creation of the association. Our goal is to have market managers take part in a visioning session where they would determine the structure and function of the association. Managers would decide what they would find valuable in an association, how they would be organized and plan for long-term sustainability.

### **Project Approach**

The creation of a farmers market association for Wisconsin began late in 2009. Farmers' market managers were surveyed to determine their availability and preferences for a meeting dates. Since

many grower and market manager meetings had already been scheduled for the winter of 2009/2010, managers elected to delay the meeting until early in 2011 in order to maximize participation.

Farmers Market managers from around the state came together in January of 2011 with the assistance of a facilitator to determine the focus and the goals of the Wisconsin managers. The process began with a needs assessment. Managers evaluated the strengths and weaknesses of their markets and of themselves as market managers. After identifying the common concerns, managers in attendance decided to create an association for Wisconsin Farmers Market Association (WFMA) with the following purpose.

**The purpose of WFMA is to aid in the success of Wisconsin Farmers Markets by promoting local food consumption through the support and education of market managers, vendors, communities and consumers.**

By-laws for the association were also developed (attached) and a board elected at this meeting. Committees for the association were also developed related to the areas identified during the need assessment (Membership, Marketing, Advocacy, Education, Tourism, and Communications).

### **Goals and Outcomes Achieved**

Since the creation of the Association several additional actions have been taken. The farmers' market board identified officers, incorporated the association, received a federal employer identification number and opened a bank account. We also worked together to develop membership types, a membership fee structure and membership management system. We meet monthly via phone conference as a board.

The greatest amount of work has been the development of the website (<http://www.wifarmersmarkets.org/>) which helps the association to achieve two goals. The first is to promote the over 200 farmers markets around the state. The public access part of the website has sections on product seasonality, food selection, preparation, and nutritional value, locating a farmers market using a clickable map and information about the association and how to become a member. Waukesha County UW-Extension has worked in cooperation with the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection to develop a statewide list of markets, their locations, days and hours. In addition to this basic listing, additional information can be added. Farmers markets have been invited to include a narrative about their market and the products sold there and up to 10 pictures of each market which will run as a slide show above the market listing.

The second portion of the website is for member markets. This part of the site includes blogging for market managers, a library for market rules, promotional materials, articles of interest, current health regulations and other law or guidelines related to farmers markets.

The association's education subcommittee is also working to coordinate an educational conference which they intend to make an annual event. We have worked to join our educational conference with the existing Wisconsin Fresh Market Fruit and Vegetable Growers Conference held annually in January.

Two days of educational sessions are currently planned based of manager identified topics including: using social media to promote farmer markets, working with local businesses to promote/improve your market, dealing with emergencies at the market, and what vendors are looking for from their market manager. An annual association meeting will also take place at the meeting.

Future short term goals include promoting the association and recruiting new members to the association, finalizing and promoting the annual meeting, continued development of the website and membership library.

### **Beneficiaries**

Farmers' Market Managers: The efficiency and effectiveness of farmers' market managers will increase significantly. Markets will no longer need to sift through websites and regulations that are not relevant to Wisconsin. They will be able to easily connect with other market managers, educational materials and marketing ideas. Managers will not have to recreate the wheel, but be able to apply ideas and policies that have already found success at other markets.

Farmers' Market Vendors: The creation of the association and the association's website will enable better and more efficient management of farmers markets. This will aid in retention of market managers and improve the profitability of markets for vendors. This increase profitability may lead to a greater number of farmers, increases in the number of people employed by farm businesses and the creation of innovative products.

General Public: By making farmers markets easier to locate through the associations website the general public will have greater access to fresh, local and nutritious food. The public may also experience an increase in the diversity and innovation of products found as markets become more profitable.

### **Lessons Learned**

Farmers Markets in Wisconsin tend to form at a grassroots level. Markets are a reflection of their communities. The result is market structure, management and vendors vary from market to market. Although markets differ and had issues that were not held in common, they were able to identify many areas where they could work together in ways to improve their markets. Although these areas were identified as important, it has been difficult to make progress on some of the areas. Most of the managers are already quite busy, and although they believe in the association their ability to be active ebbs and flows in relation to the rest of their commitments. Continued development of the association will help solidify commitments. As the managers begin to see what they are capable of, their follow through will increase.

### **Contact Person**

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# **BY-LAWS OF WISCONSIN FARMERS MARKET ASSOCIATION, INC.**

## **ARTICLE I: ORGANIZATION**

The name of the organization shall be Wisconsin Farmers Market Association, Inc.

The fiscal year shall be the calendar year.

## **ARTICLE II: PURPOSE**

The purpose of WFMA is to aid in the success of Wisconsin Farmers Markets by promoting local food consumption through the support and education of market managers, vendors, communities and consumers.

## **ARTICLE III: MEMBERSHIP**

Membership in this organization shall be open to Farmers Markets located in the State of Wisconsin and to those who support the purpose of the Wisconsin Farmers Market Association.

Voting members shall consist of one manager or delegate from each Wisconsin Farmers Market that has been approved by the Board of Directors and are in good standing.

Non-Voting Members shall consist of all other membership categories.

## **ARTICLE IV: MEETINGS**

The annual membership meeting of this organization shall be held in January each and every year, the Board of Directors shall select the day but it shall not be more than 60 days from the month fixed by these By-Laws.

The Secretary shall cause to be mailed and e-mailed to every member in good standing at the address listed in the membership roster of this organization a notice telling the time and place of such annual meeting at least 30 days prior to the meeting.

Regular meetings of this organization shall be held at a time/location decided upon by the Board of Directors.

Voting members present physically or electronically at a formally called meeting of this organization, as outlined in these bylaws, and 2/3rds of the current Board of Directors shall constitute a quorum.

Special meetings of this organization may be called by the president when deemed necessary for the best interest of the organization. Notices of such meeting shall be mailed and emailed to all members at their addresses as they appear in the membership roster at least ten (10) calendar days before the scheduled date set for the special meeting. Such notice shall state the reasons that the meeting has been called, the business to be transacted at the meeting and by whom it was called.

At the request of 30% of the members of the Board of Directors or 25% percent of the voting members of the organization, the president shall cause a special meeting to be called but such

request must be made in writing at least ten (10) calendar days before the requested scheduled date.

No other business but that specified in the notice may be transacted at such special meeting.

Meetings should be conducted using Roberts Rules of Order Newly Revised.

#### **ARTICLE V: BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

The business of this organization shall be managed by a Board of Directors consisting of nine members who will be elected at the organization's annual meeting. The elected Board of Directors shall, at the first board meeting following the annual meeting, elect officers of the organization. Consideration shall be given to geographical distribution, market size, and community size to ensure fair representation of the membership. Directors shall serve for a term of three years. Directors shall be elected to staggered terms, so that each year three directors are elected.

The Board of Directors shall have the control and management of the affairs and business of this organization. Such Board of Directors shall only act in the name of the organization when it shall be regularly convened by its chairman after due notice to all the directors of such meeting.

A simple majority of the members of the Board of Directors shall constitute a quorum and the meetings of the Board of Directors shall be held regularly as needed but not less than 4 times per year.

Each director shall have one vote and such voting may not be done by proxy.

Vacancies in the Board of Directors shall be filled by a vote of the majority of the remaining members of the Board of Directors for the balance of the year.

A Board member needing to resign must do so in writing to the Board of Directors.

A director may be removed when sufficient cause exists for such removal as determined by a majority of the Board. The Board of Directors may entertain charges against any director. The Board of Directors shall adopt such rules for a removal hearing as it may in its discretion consider necessary for the best interests of the organization.

#### **ARTICLE VI: OFFICERS**

The officers of the organization shall be President; Vice President; Secretary; and Treasurer and they shall be elected by the Board of Directors from their number annually. The offices of Secretary and Treasurer may be combined.

The President shall preside at all membership meetings. The President shall by virtue of the office be Chairman of the Board of Directors. The President shall present at each annual meeting of the organization an annual report of the work of the organization. The President shall appoint all committees. The President shall see that all books, reports and certificates required by law are properly kept or filed. The President shall have such powers as may be reasonably construed as belonging to the chief executive of any organization.

The Vice President shall in the event of the absence or inability of the President to exercise his office become acting president of the organization with all the rights, privileges and powers as if

he had been the duly elected president. The Vice President shall have access to all financial transactions on a regular basis. The Vice President shall perform other duties as assigned by the President.

The Secretary shall keep the minutes and records of the organization. It shall be his duty to file any certificate required by any statute, federal or state. The Secretary shall give and serve all notices to members of this organization and shall be the official custodian of the records. The Secretary shall attend to all correspondence of the organization and shall exercise all duties incident to the office of Secretary.

The Treasurer shall have the care and custody of all monies belonging to the organization and shall be solely responsible for such monies or securities of the organization. All funds must be deposited in a designated association account. The Treasurer shall render at stated periods as the Board of Directors shall determine a written account of the finances of the organization and such report shall be physically affixed to the minutes of the Board of Directors of such meeting. The Treasurer shall exercise all duties incident to the office of Treasurer.

#### **ARTICLE VII: SALARIES**

The Board of Directors shall contract or hire and fix the compensation of any and all employees which they in their discretion may determine to be necessary for the conduct of the business of the organization and may assign to such employees any responsibilities they deem appropriate.

#### **ARTICLE VIII: DUES**

The dues of this organization shall be payable annually and shall be for one fiscal year. Membership Dues are not pro-rated and are not refundable. Dues for this organization and due date shall be set by the Board of Directors and presented to and approved by the membership.

#### **ARTICLE IX: CONFLICT OF INTEREST POLICY**

The Board of Directors of WFMA shall receive no compensation for their services as Board members. It is allowable that they may be reimbursed for expenses incurred while carrying out their duties. The details of any such expenses must be approved by the Treasurer prior to reimbursement.

#### **ARTICLE X: AMENDMENTS**

These By-Laws may be altered, amended, repealed or added to by an affirmative vote of a simple majority of the members present at a meeting where announcement of the bylaw change was sent with the official notice of the meeting.

#### **ARTICLE XI DISSOLUTION**

In case of dissolution of the WFMA, all of the remaining assets and property shall, after payment of necessary expenses, be distributed to an organization or organizations having like aims and goals as the WFMA; otherwise, all corporate assets will be disposed of according to applicable state law.

**Adopted on: January 28, 2011 at the Organizational Meeting of the Wisconsin Farmers Market Association.**