FARMERS MARKET
PROMOTION PROGRAM

grant activities
& impacts
2006–2011

FARMERS MARKET COALITION IN PARTNERSHIP
WITH MARKET UMBRELLA // JUNE 2013
STACY MILLER & NATALIE ROPER
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This report was published by the Farmers Market Coalition in partnership with Market Umbrella. Data was collected in cooperation with the United States Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS), which provided program data for use in this report. The authors would like to thank members of the FMPP Evaluation Advisory Group, including Alfonso Morales, Associate Professor, Dept. of Urban & Regional Planning, University of Wisconsin; Anne Palmer, Program Director, Center for Livable Future, Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health University; Richard Pirog, C. S. Mott Group, Michigan State University; Jeffrey O’Hara, Economist, Food & Environment Program, Union of Concerned Scientists; and Kathleen Fitzgerald, food systems consultant. This report was edited by Kathryn Rogers and designed by Matt Hannigan. The authors would like to thank Christine Hursh at the University of Wisconsin who, with Alfonso Morales, conducted qualitative analysis of the survey comments. They also thank the many FMPP awardees who took time out of their busy lives in the fall of 2012 to thoughtfully share information about their grant projects in the survey.
The Farmers Market Promotion Program (FMPP) was authorized in the 2002 Farm Bill with a mission to improve, expand, and develop direct producer-to-consumer marketing opportunities for farmers. This study finds that, since launching in 2006, FMPP has supported a wide array of direct-marketing programs at local, regional, and state levels, with community impacts that are widespread and incremental as well as targeted and immediate. Since receiving FMPP awards, grantees report increases in agricultural producer participation, vendor sales, and product diversity.

According to a survey of FMPP grantees conducted in the fall of 2012, more than two thirds of grantees observed farmers mentoring other farmers in direct-marketing skills since the beginning of their FMPP grant. FMPP funded skill development in business and marketing strategies that resulted in season extension, increased marketing, improved food safety, and professional development opportunities. Most grantees increased the number of weeks and days of the week their operations were open for business, which supported increases in shopper visitor counts and first-time customers.
More than three quarters of grantees used some portion of grant funds to reach out to participants in federal nutrition programs. Eighty-six percent of respondents used FMPP funds to help establish new partnerships with other organizations or agencies to carry out goals of mutual interest and maximize existing resources. Participation in FMPP motivated many grantees to leverage other funding sources and form partnerships, and 94 percent of responding grantees said that FMPP made their organization stronger than it was prior to the grant.

Eighty-six percent of grantees stated that the process of applying for and managing the FMPP grant increased their confidence in preparing competitive grant proposals. For 42 percent of grantees, FMPP was their first government grant. The most frequently cited source for other funding leveraged by FMPP is private grants. Forty-five percent of grantee organizations were founded after 2000. Seventy-one percent of project directors said their projects relied in some way on volunteer staffing. Since FMPP funds could be used for staff salaries, grantees were able to add hours to an existing position or hire part-time staff, many of which continued after the grant ended.

FMPP grants often included education components for producers, market managers, and their local communities. FMPP funds used for building professional skills among managers or equivalent staff promote increased vendor sales. More than half the respondents said their organization accomplished more activities with FMPP support than were stated in their initial plan of work—even small grants resulted in unexpected benefits.

To download a copy of this report, please visit fmpp.farmermarketcoalition.org.
The Farmers Market Coalition (FMC) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit founded in 2006 to strengthen farmers markets and improve their ability to serve farmers, consumers, and communities. In 2012, FMC partnered with another 501(c)(3) organization, Market Umbrella, to understand, evaluate, and communicate the impacts of the Farmers Market Promotion Program. Market Umbrella, which operates the Crescent City Farmers Market in New Orleans, Louisiana, seeks to cultivate the field of public markets for the public good.

HISTORY OF THE FARMERS MARKET PROMOTION PROGRAM

The Farmers Market Promotion Program (FMPP) was established in the 2002 Farm Bill through an amendment of the Farmer-to-Consumer Direct Marketing Act of 1976, enacted to “lower the cost and increase the quality of food to such consumers while providing increased financial returns to the farmers.” It required the USDA to work with state departments of agriculture to promote direct marketing. Additionally, the statute created the AMS Farmers Market Promotion Program.

The purposes of the FMPP, as stated in the law, are:

A) to increase domestic consumption of agricultural commodities by improving and expanding, or assisting in the improvement and expansion of, domestic farmers markets, roadside stands, community-supported agriculture programs, agri-tourism activities, and other direct producer-to-consumer market opportunities; and

B) to develop, or aid in the development of, new farmers markets, roadside stands, community-supported agriculture programs, agri-tourism activities, and other direct producer-to-consumer marketing opportunities.”
Eligible applicants include agricultural cooperatives, producer networks, producer associations, local governments, nonprofit corporations, public benefit corporations, economic development corporations, regional farmers market authorities, and tribal governments. The program, housed within USDA’s Agricultural Marketing Service, first announced funding availability in 2006, when it awarded 20 grants totaling $900,000, most for durations of 12 to 18 months.

The 2008 legislation also clarified that the program is intended to support all forms of direct marketing, including “organizing, marketing, training, business plan development, community outreach and education, and other associated activities designed to establish or improve direct marketing opportunities for farmers, ranchers, and the consumers that they serve.” Agri-tourism activities were added to the list of activities that the program supports, and producer networks and associations were added to the list of eligible applicants. Congress mandated that no less than 10 percent of FMPP funds must be used to support the use of electronic benefit transfers (EBT) for federal nutrition programs—Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)—at farmers markets and community-supported agriculture enterprises.

The FMPP is unique in its accessibility to a wide spectrum of eligible nonprofits and agencies working on the ground in communities at local, county, bioregion, or state levels. Between 2006 and 2011, the program received 2,327 proposals. Using an external peer review process, applications were ranked and grants were awarded in order of rank until funding was exhausted. Approximately 19 percent of proposals were funded during this period. FMPP reviewers include farmers as well as market managers, academics, and others, and peers are matched to applications based on their areas of experience. Eligible organizations may be motivated by a variety of missions, including health and wellness, economic development, agricultural education, equity and access, or environmental education.

### Table One

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2012</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>$3 M</td>
<td>$5 M</td>
<td>$5 M</td>
<td>$10 M</td>
<td>$10 M</td>
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</table>
Survey results show that for 42 percent of respondents (76 of 180 responses), FMPP was their first government grant and that 45% of responding organizations were formed since 2000. While it is unknown how this rate compares to other USDA programs, it appears to show that many of the organizations funded by FMPP are young, with little grant-writing experience. On its side, AMS had limited experience in making grants to direct marketing and community based organizations. The agency runs two other programs: the Specialty Crop Block Grant (SCBG), a $55 million non-competitive block grant program available only to state departments of agriculture; and the Federal-State Marketing Improvement Program (FSMIP), for which only land grant institutions and state departments of agriculture are eligible to apply. These state government grantees have much larger infrastructure and staff capacity than most of the nonprofit organizations that make up the bulk of the potential FMPP grantees.

FMPP awarded $32,310,288 through 575 grants since the program's inception in 2006. Information on FMPP grantees is publically available on the USDA's website as part of the Know Your Farmer, Know Your Food (KYF) initiative. KYF is a growing database of federally funded programs supporting local food system development and innovation. The KYF Compass includes a map showing the location of 2009–2012 grantees, as well as a small number of grant case studies. The grantees' final reports to USDA are available online at the AMS website.

PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH

This research effort sought to understand the characteristics and outcomes of FMPP grants funded between 2006 and 2011 in order to measure and articulate the program's impact on the development and sustainability of farmers markets, and communicate this information to a broad reach of stakeholders. This study explored grant characteristics and indicators in several areas:

- Farm and economic impacts
- Promotion and marketing
- Expanding food access
- Infrastructure and capacity building
- Professional development

Because farmers markets are highly visible primary nodes that foster agricultural, economic, and community development, this evaluation may also serve as a lens to understand activities, measure outcomes, and identify challenges characteristic of farmers markets and similar short–value-chain enterprises.
METHODOLOGY

Beginning in September 2012, the Farmers Market Coalition (FMC) drafted a survey instrument and identified its survey sampling frame to be a census of all grantees awarded between 2006 and 2011. FMC requested and received grantee contact information from the USDA Agricultural Marketing Service with the express purpose of inviting them to participate in the grantee survey.

After receiving input on the survey instrument draft from the project’s Evaluation Advisory Group, the FMC conducted a survey in October 2012, to assess and communicate the impacts of the FMPP. Project directors from 400 organizations representing the 444 grants awarded between 2006 and 2011 were contacted via email inviting them to participate in the research effort. Reminder emails were sent weekly for four weeks, with approximately 25 individual emails and phone calls made to non-respondents. Divided into seven sections, the survey contained 64 optional questions, including several that solicited written comments. The survey received 202 responses—an organizational response rate of 51 percent. This represented 213 grants, as nine responding grantees had two FMPP grants in different years. One had three separate FMPP grants. Those that responded had a survey completion rate of 94 percent.

The researchers attempted to ensure that the survey reached appropriate parties by first conducting a test email of the survey population using email addresses provided by AMS. Undeliverable and mistyped email addresses were flagged, and contact information was identified by searching organizations’ websites. Then, a pre-survey email describing the project was sent to the revised list on September 30, 2012, asking recipients to complete a short online form with updated contact information if they were not the appropriate people to respond to the survey. This allowed the research team to update an additional 30 contacts. Throughout the survey response period, FMC staff continued to receive emails and phone calls notifying them of staff changes, and survey invitations were then sent to the updated contacts.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The nature of FMPP grantees presented the researchers with some challenges. The highly fluid, rapidly evolving nature of the sector served by the program means that some project directors were in new positions or otherwise no longer working or volunteering for the funded organization. The lack of reliable, geographically representative control group data reflecting the FMPP eligible population also means that change reported by grantees may have resulted from a variety of non-grant factors. Additionally, because some projects relied on partnerships or relationships with external fiscal agents, the person best equipped to respond to some of the survey questions was in some cases not actually employed by or accessible through the grantee organization.
This research included FMPP grants awarded between 2006 and 2011. Many of the 2011 award respondents noted in the comments section that their projects were still in progress and that they had responded to the questions to the best of their ability. For questions designed to measure change occurring since the grant was awarded, 2011 respondents may have skewed the overall distribution of data toward more conservative estimates of change. For that reason, these respondents were removed from the data set for the analysis of certain questions in which the measured change was statistically different. This report identifies and makes note of these instances. In comments sections, several respondents noted that some of the questions were hard for them to answer, either because the project was still in progress or because they simply had not collected the data that the survey was requesting. Because no questions were required, respondents had the option to skip questions they felt to be inapplicable to their projects. This report reflects information available at the time the survey was conducted; results do not necessarily apply to the overall FMPP grantee or farmers market population.

RESPONDENT OVERVIEW

In the first section of the survey, grantees were asked to provide basic information about their FMPP-funded projects, which could be compared to information already known about the survey population.

Thirty-six of the 400 organizations funded between 2006 and 2011 received more than one grant during that time period. Awardees were permitted to apply for additional funds after sitting out one grant cycle from the time of their previous grant completion. Six of the respondents received multiple FMPP awards between 2006 and 2011; the respondent population represents 213 grants.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL GRANTS AWARDED</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>149</td>
<td>444</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL GRANT RESPONSES</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>213</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PERCENT OF GRANTS REPRESENTED IN THIS SURVEY</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
GEOGRAPHIC REPRESENTATION

FMPP grants have been awarded in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico. Organizations in the North Central region (Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota, and Wisconsin) collectively received the most FMPP grants, totaling $7,424,115 over seven years. This region includes more states than any other region, but the individual states with the highest total number of FMPP awards include those in other regions, such as California (55), New York (33), Michigan (30), Oregon (27), Pennsylvania (20), and Virginia (20).

For the survey research period (2006–2011), the geographic distribution of respondents was roughly in keeping with the overall distribution of grants. States in which less than 25 percent of awardee organizations responded include Alabama, Arkansas, Arizona, Florida, Kentucky, Maryland, Mississippi, New Jersey, and West Virginia. See Appendix A for a state-by-state list of the number and amount of grants between 2006 and 2012.

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**figure one**

![Map of the United States showing regional FMPP grants](image-url)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NORTHEAST</td>
<td>$4.58 MIL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MID- ATLANTIC</td>
<td>$3.93 MIL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOUTHEAST</td>
<td>$5.32 MIL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NORTH CENTRAL</td>
<td>$7.42 MIL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOUTHWEST</td>
<td>$2.52 MIL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ROCKY MOUNTAIN</td>
<td>$2.42 MIL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FAR WEST</td>
<td>$6.10 MIL</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
GRANT AMOUNT

The smallest grant represented among survey respondents was $6,128; the largest was $100,000 (the award cap). The average award amount among survey participants was $54,252, which is slightly higher than the 2006–2011 FMPP awardee population average of $52,454. Over the life of the program, the average award amount has grown over time, to $56,162, with the smallest award being $2,000 and the largest the maximum of $100,000. See Appendix B for a state by state list of funding awarded in years 2006 through 2012.

Grantees were asked whether their grant activities had a rural, urban, or suburban focus and were given the option selecting more than one. A majority of respondents (121, or 60 percent) said that their grant activities primarily targeted rural areas, while slightly fewer (110, or 55 percent) said their activities primarily targeted urban areas. Less than one quarter said that their grant activities focused on suburban areas.

Among responding grantees, 68 percent (136) represented the organization performing most of the grant activities, without a fiscal agent. Twenty percent (39) served as a nonprofit fiscal agent, and 12 percent (24) served as a government fiscal agent for the organization performing the grant-funded activities. When government fiscal agents were removed from the data set, the mean year of organizational founding was 1988. Forty-five percent (76) of them were founded after 2000.
Seventy percent (139) of responding organizations said that, at the time their proposal was submitted, there were two or fewer paid staff members working on local food or farmers market activities for their organization. One staff was identified as an individual paid for working at least one-quarter time (about 10 hours a week). Fourteen percent (28) said their organization had no paid staff working on local food or farmers market activities, while a small number (11, or 6 percent) said that they had 10 or more; all eleven of these higher-capacity grantees reported that their projects focused on urban areas. The average number of staff working on local food activities was 2.4.

**USE OF FMPP FUNDS**

Promotional efforts (website development, television specials, print materials, and special events), training and education (for farmers, vendors, managers, and customers), and market expansion (infrastructure improvements, market research, and hiring of support staff) were the most common motivators for FMPP-funded activities. When asked how FMPP grant funds were used, the most common activity was increasing market awareness (171, or 85 percent), followed by farmer/vendor training (104, 51 percent), hiring staff (100, 50 percent), EBT (80, 40 percent), market manager training (77, 38 percent), and developing a network or association (50, 25 percent). Those citing “other activities” (82, 41 percent), mentioned opening a new market (or expanding days or locations), hosting educational events, purchasing equipment or supplies, developing training kitchens and community gardens, conducting research, and improving market communications with vendors and customers through website upgrades and email newsletters.

FMPP’s flexibility in the eligible uses of grant funds allowed many grantees to implement a wide variety of activities and experimental promotion efforts.
agricultural & economic impact

Although a small number of local and state-level studies have explored economic impacts of direct marketing, limited nationwide data is available on sales generated through these outlets. Based on the 2005 National Farmers Market Survey, USDA researchers estimated more than $1 billion in annual sales through farmers markets at the time. Recent reports have provided reviews of past efforts to calculate total economic impact and estimated that “modest public support for up to 500 farmers markets each year could create as many as 13,500 jobs over a five-year period.” Since the number of farmers markets has grown 79 percent since 2006, extrapolations of current annual sales totals should be made with caution. This study of grantees explored a number of indicators of entrepreneurial development and economic activity, including total vendor sales. Findings suggest that dollar value of sales at farmers markets from 2006–2011 might be more than twice the 2005 estimate.

THE ROLE OF AGRICULTURAL PRODUCERS IN GRANTEE ACTIVITIES

Because the primary goal of the FMPP is to support agricultural producers in direct marketing to consumers, the survey attempted to make a distinction between producers (such as farmers, ranchers, foragers, and fishers) and what might broadly be considered vendors, including bakers, craftspersons, resellers, or those selling ready-to-eat food. The survey clarified to respondents that the term vendors includes both agricultural producers (farmers) and other kinds of vendors, while the term producers includes only agricultural producers.
Grantees were asked what percentage of vendors currently involved in their organization’s activities are agricultural producers. Of 186 responses, 65 percent (120) said that more than 60 percent of their vendors are agricultural producers; more than half of respondents (65) stated that at least 81 percent of their vendors are agricultural producers. The median percentage of vendors identified as agricultural producers was 64 percent. A very small number of respondents (7) said that none of their vendors were agricultural producers at the time of the survey, because they engaged in research or manager trainings or otherwise interpreted vendor as outside the scope of their project’s activities.

**GROWTH IN THE NUMBER OF PARTICIPATING PRODUCERS**

One hundred sixty-seven respondents provided an estimate of the number of agricultural producers participating in their organizations’ farmers market or local food activities prior to their FMPP grant and in 2012. For 2006–2010 grantees, the average number of participating producers increased 37 percent (from 28 to 38) from the time their grant was awarded to the time of the survey. This rate of increase is lower (26 percent versus 37 percent) for 2011 awardees. Forty-two percent (78) stated that they started the grant period with 10 or fewer agricultural producers participating, including those that started new outlets with grant support. The percentage of grantees reporting ten or fewer participating producers at the time of the survey, however, was only 22 percent. The number of grantees reporting the participation of more than 50 agricultural producers increased from 28 (before their grant) to 37 (at the time of the survey). The number of grantees reporting the participation of more than 100 agricultural producers in their organization’s activities increased 42% from the start of their FMPP award to the time of the survey. Reflecting the variability in the amount of data grantees collected, a small number (8 percent) did not know how many were participating at the time of the survey. A general increase in producer participation was reported by the majority (13, or 68 percent) of the few who did not know the exact number of participating producers.
TOTAL ANNUAL SALES

Although not all grants directly supported market activity with measurable sales (focusing instead, for example, on producer training, manager training, or other projects), this survey collected information on reported sales as they related to projects that could accurately estimate this data. Provided with ranges of $100,000, grantees were asked to provide their best estimate of annual vendor sales before they were awarded their FMPP grant and of their current sales. For those providing an estimated range, annual sales increased an average of 27 percent (from $254,700 to $324,600, as calculated by finding the average among all midpoints of the ranges reported). Within this sample, estimated annual vendor sales reported at the time of the survey totaled $41,550,000—$9.2 million more than they reported grossing prior to the grant, and 4.6 times the total amount of grant funding ($8,950,685) awarded to those respondents.

Recognizing that the data may be skewed by a large number of respondents (79, or 64 percent) who estimated that their sales had not yet changed significantly enough to push them into the next $100,000 range, those with grants awarded in 2011 were omitted to test the effect of the recent grantees. The ratio of total vendor sales today to total grant funding was 6.1 (instead of 4.6) when 2011 grantees were removed from the data set. A t-test revealed that among 2006–2010 grantees, the mean reported change in sales was $14,591 higher ($58,450.72) than for the 2011 grantees ($43,859.65). Interestingly, the value of sales reported at the time of the survey was 218 percent higher for 2006–2010 grantee respondents than it was for those awarded in 2011, indicating that sales are continuing to grow after the end of grant periods. Of the 176 respondents, 46 (26 percent) stated that they did not know enough to provide a reliable estimate.

Commenting on changes to annual sales, one grantee (with an award of less than $16,000) credited their FMPP with creating “an additional revenue stream of $70,000 to the vendors at the Market.”

CHANGES TO THE TOTAL NUMBER OF VENDOR STAFF INVOLVED IN MARKET SALES

Grantees report the addition of an average of 1.8 staff to existing vendors since their grant was awarded. A small number (8, or 5 percent) observed the addition of 10 or more staff to existing vendor business; the average grant amount of these projects was 14 percent higher ($61,733) than the total respondent average ($54,252). Of the 41 percent reporting no change, nearly half (31, 44 percent) began their grants in 2011, which may not have resulted in a significant change in vendor staffing numbers at the time of the survey.
CHANGES TO PRODUCT DIVERSITY

A great majority of grantees (155, 88 percent) reported an increase in the variety of local farm products available at their market outlets—both existing and new market outlets—since their FMPP grants were awarded. Only four respondents, all from southern states, cited a decrease in the number of local farm products available. Drought conditions were specifically referenced as affecting agricultural productivity.

Increases were further reported in the comments section, where respondents said such things as “Vegetable growers are planting more crops and a wider diversity of crops,” and “today we have a larger variety of products [because] farmers are willing to experiment.”

table three

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHANGES IN PRODUCT DIVERSITY</th>
<th>COUNT</th>
<th>PERCENTAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SIGNIFICANT INCREASE IN THE NUMBER OF TYPES OF FARM PRODUCTS AVAILABLE</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SLIGHT INCREASE IN THE NUMBER OF TYPES OF FARM PRODUCTS AVAILABLE</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NO CHANGE</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SLIGHT DECREASE IN THE NUMBER OF TYPES OF FARM PRODUCTS AVAILABLE</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SIGNIFICANT DECREASE IN THE NUMBER OF TYPES OF FARM PRODUCTS AVAILABLE</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL RESPONSES</td>
<td>176</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
VENDORS EXPANDING AND DIVERSIFYING THEIR RETAIL OPTIONS

One role that direct-marketing outlets like farmers markets can play is that of a business incubator, providing a retail environment with low barriers to entry, from which vendors can choose to diversify and expand.9,10 Grantees were asked if, since their project began, their participating vendors’ products were now also sold to retail stores, restaurants, or other institutions. Among the 155 who responded to the question, 45 percent (66) said that between one and four producers were now selling products to additional retail outlets. Twenty percent (31) reported ten or more. On average, grantees reported that 4 vendors had diversified into additional retail outlets. More than half (54 percent) of those who had not observed any vendors diversifying into other outlets (26) were awarded grants in 2011, indicating that insufficient time had passed for such changes to occur or to observe such changes.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS ABOUT FARM IMPACTS

The survey invited comments on farm and economic impacts, and received 104 responses, generally corroborating reported increases in sales, farmer and vendor participation, and the variety of locally grown farm products. Indirect factors—including drought and the economic recession—were frequently noted as considerations for those who felt their vendors experienced limited growth in sales. Also noted was the time lag required to measure the effects that grant-funded advertising, education, training, and organizing activities have on vendor sales and participation.

One 2011 grantees reinforced findings that community impacts are diverse and incremental rather than targeted and immediate: “The trainings that our organization hosted has resulted in more interest from farmers to implement new growing methods and marketing methods. While the change has not been drastic, we have seen a steady increase in yield, diversity of product, and number of vendors and vendor staff.”

Additionally, many grantees appeared to measure success beyond quantitative increases in vendor sales, observing increases in the ability of farmers to run competitive businesses. As one grantee observed, “farmers are now treating the market as a business, with better business practices and customer relations.” Others noticed “an increase in crop production by each of the [socially disadvantaged] farmers [to sell at over 40 farmers markets]” and “an improvement in how vendors market and display their crops.”

Recognizing the important feedback loop of demand and supply, another grantee explained that “USDA FMPP funds produced a significant increase in vendor participation, customer foot traffic, and sales volume. These increases complemented and compounded one another.”
Among eligible uses of FMPP funding are promotional activities designed to increase consumer awareness and community involvement in farm-direct marketing activities (e.g., farmers markets, CSAs, and on-farm markets). Eighty-five percent of survey respondents said they conducted promotion and outreach designed to raise awareness of their markets or other local food outlets.

**ADVERTISING AND OUTREACH ACTIVITIES**

In the survey, grantees were asked what, if any, kinds of advertising and outreach activities they conducted as part of their project. In total, 145 respondents developed nearly 57,000 flyers, posters, banners, and billboards, and many advertisements on buses. Five hundred fifty-one new permanent signs were funded by 99 FMPP grants, including, in one instance, a new mural. Similarly, 88 responding grantees used FMPP funds for a total of 1,077 cooking classes and nutrition education activities.

While hosting special events on site during operating hours is common for both farmers markets and on-farm markets, survey results showed that 111 respondents held a total of 1,134 other marketing events in the community as well, including farm tours, health fairs, and workshops, in addition to participating in community events hosted by other organizations.

One hundred six projects used social media for promotional purposes, totaling nearly 2,000 social media campaigns. Facebook was specifically mentioned by several grantees, as were email newsletters and website updates. FMPP supported radio spots, TV public service announcements, and promotional DVDs for 71 grantees, totaling nearly 2,800 aired advertisements.
Newspaper advertisements, coupons, and representation at various community fairs and festivals were also frequently cited as media for communicating with prospective shoppers and existing patrons. A small number of grantees reported door-to-door outreach as well as presentations made about local food to community organizations. Other grantees targeted a wider geographic audience, one working “with over forty farmers markets in providing marketing materials,” which “published five regional guidebooks listing locations, operating hours, and seasonal product availability.”

**CHANGES IN AVERAGE VISITOR COUNT**

Since receiving an FMPP award, the majority of grantees reported an increase in average customer visitor count. Though grantees operating market outlets did not provide discrete numbers of their average customer counts before their award versus today, they reported that, on average, visitor count increased by 47 percent.

There was a positive relationship between the change in visitor counts since the FMPP was awarded and the use of grant funds specifically for marketing initiatives, as found in an ordinary least squares regression. Using FMPP funds to increase market awareness showed a statistically significant positive relationship at a level of .05, showing that using FMPP funds to increase market awareness is correlated with a 22 percent increase in visitor counts. Additionally, there is a significant positive relationship between the implementation of at least two marketing activities and an increase in visitor counts.

**EXPANDING THE CUSTOMER BASE FOR LOCAL FOOD**

An overwhelming majority of grantees (151, or 94 percent) cited an increase in the number of first-time customers since their grant was awarded. This includes 70 grantees (44 percent) who reported a significant increase (as opposed to somewhat of an increase). More than half of the eight respondents observing no change in the number of first time customers were awarded grants in 2011 and may not yet have information about the full impact of their projects.
CHANGES IN HOURS OR DAYS OF OPERATION

Comparing 2012 with the point at which they applied for their FMPP grant, more than half (90, or 56 percent) said that their operations have increased the number of weeks during the year in which they are open for business. More than one third (59) said that their operations had increased the number of days per week that they were open. This appears to be in keeping with trends toward season extension and growth in the number of farmers markets operating in winter months. A t-test analysis revealed that grantees who increased their weeks of operation experienced more than twice the level of increase in customer visitor counts than those who did not increase their weeks of operation: a 60 percent increase versus a 25 percent increase in customer visitor counts (at 99.9 percent confidence).

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS ABOUT MARKET PROMOTION AND DEVELOPMENT

Comments on market development and promotion were invited, eliciting 93 responses that generally reinforce reported increases in customer awareness, participation, and retention resulting from a variety of promotional strategies. FMPP grants have been used to expand options for vendors and customers by enabling awardees to use marketing strategies to attract more customers, especially first-time customers, and to provide those customers with more options. One grantee operating an online “virtual” farmers market credited a nearly 100 percent increase in web traffic largely to the FMPP grant.

Challenges with promotion were noted by a small number of grantees, especially those attempting to focus outreach on immigrants or disenfranchised communities. One stated that it was “difficult to promote the market through media . . . [so] we worked to see everything in two languages. We really needed more funding for marketing than we had anticipated.”

Flexibility and partnerships also appear key to catalyzing individual and community change, as evidenced by one grantee who said that, even though it was not planned for in their proposal, a new weekday market was developed at a regional hospital that “provided access to new shoppers in an underserved part of the community and further built the connection between healthy local foods and community health.” This respondent credited FMPP for enabling “strong promotion for farmers market network partners which lead to a doubling of [debit and EBT] token sales.”
In the 2008 Farm Bill, Congress stipulated that “no less than 10 percent of the funds for the FMPP will be used to support the use of electronic benefit transfers (EBT) for Federal nutrition programs (food stamps and WIC) at farmers markets and community-supported agriculture enterprises.” Starting in 2009, AMS designed ways for applicants to distinguish, in proposals and budgets, activities specifically designed to institute EBT acceptance. According to AMS records, 22 percent of all grants (and of all grant funding) between 2006 and 2011 supported new EBT projects. See Appendix A for a state-by-state tally of funded EBT-related grants.

In 2011, the FMPP began giving priority to projects that included activities focused on food deserts, which are defined as census tracts with a substantial share of residents who have limited access to a grocery store or affordable food retail outlet with healthful selections. Of 187 responding FMPP grantees, 64 percent (119) conducted grant activities directed toward improving fresh food access in food deserts, nearly half of which received awards prior to 2011. AMS records show that, although less than 20 percent of respondents include EBT activities in their proposals, more than 75 percent (142, or 76 percent) reported using FMPP funds to expand outreach to vulnerable consumers (low-income families and individuals participating in federal nutrition programs such as SNAP and WIC).

Among those who used FMPP funds for EBT-related projects (89), 66 percent said that they facilitated outreach to ethnic minorities or low-income groups, 48 percent said they trained market staff in the implementation of EBT, and 36 percent funded installation of a single EBT machine.

Slightly more than one third of grantees (63) reported using FMPP funds to open a new market or local food distribution outlet in a different neighborhood in order to serve vulnerable populations, with 89 percent of those grantees (56) stating that the new market or outlet still existed in 2012. This percentage did not change when 2011 grantees were removed from the data set.
Among the farmers market sector at large, SNAP sales increased dramatically in the years since FMPP began specifically allocating funding to new EBT projects, up 298 percent from $4,173,323 in fiscal year 2009 to $16,598,255 in fiscal year 2012. The number of authorized retailers classified as farmers markets, according to the USDA Food and Nutrition Service, has increased from 936 to 3,214 in that timeframe, a 243% increase.

Among grantees with funding allocated for EBT activities (130), 85 percent reported an increase in sales to Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) participants, split evenly between those whose sales “increased significantly” and those whose sales “increased somewhat.” Twelve percent (15) observed no change, and a small fraction (5, or 4 percent) reported that SNAP sales somewhat decreased.

An ordinary least squares regression found that using any one of the EBT-related activities outlined in Table 4 led to increased SNAP sales since the start of a FMPP grant. Helping vendors accept payment, in particular, was associated with SNAP sales increases at a 99 percent significance level, and using FMPP funds to install an EBT machine increased SNAP sales at a 90 percent level of significance. Because the survey did not collect discrete dollar amounts of SNAP sales both before the grant and in 2012, analysis of the precise degree of SNAP sales increase is limited.

### Table Four

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EBT-Related Activities</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fund Installation of a Single EBT Machine</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilitate Outreach to Ethnic Minorities or Low-Income Groups</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Help Vendors Accept Payment</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Train Market Staff in the Implementation of SNAP EBT</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Respondents</td>
<td>124</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

expanding fresh food access
SOCIOECONOMIC DIVERSITY OF SHOPPER BASE

Among 158 responding grantees, 81 percent (128) observed an increase in the socioeconomic diversity of their shopper base since receiving the FMPP award, the majority of whom (82 percent) stated that the increase has been sustained since the grant ended.

Of the 113 respondents who had a project dedicated to increasing food access, 92 percent (104) reported an increased return rate of SNAP EBT shoppers since their FMPP grant was awarded. Results showed a similar increase in the return rate of WIC and Farmers Market Nutrition Program (FMNP) shoppers and Senior FMNP shoppers. Eighty-three percent (69) of respondents with food access projects saw an increase in WIC FMNP customer return rate and nearly 80 percent (68) reported an increased return rate of Senior FMNP customers.
DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS ABOUT FOOD ACCESS

From 2006 to 2012, FMPP directly funded 99 projects devoted to implementing SNAP at farmers market retailers that had not previously offered it. The advent of FMPP coincides with growth in SNAP redemption at farmers markets, which quadrupled between 2009 and 2012, when the number of SNAP-authorized farmers markets increased from 936 to 3,214. However, SNAP redemption at all retailers increased during this time frame, meaning that FMPP is probably not the only factor responsible for growth in SNAP redemptions at local food retailers such as farmers markets.

Many comments suggest that raising awareness is often first among a series of other activities designed to engage and empower low-income citizens to participate in local food systems in a way that ultimately shifts demand.

Activities like developing new markets, teaching gardening skills, becoming authorized to accept SNAP and other nutrition assistance benefits, and implementing incentives for redeeming such benefits with local farmers appear to reinforce one another.

Successful methods to attract low-income community members to markets include building awareness through strategic marketing campaigns and reducing barriers of access (for example, reducing walking distance for seniors and providing simple, reliable methods for redeeming benefits). Retaining this customer base requires having systems in place to support them, including adequate vendor and market staff training on EBT equipment use, and paying attention to administrative details like voucher reimbursement processes.

As with other activities, partnerships appear key to effectively reaching and serving low-income shoppers. As one grantee explained, collaboration with the state agencies operating FMNPs on a pilot integration project allowed them to work in seven counties with a focus on “joint marketing efforts which resulted in increased sales among all three federal/state programs.” FMPP appears to provide resources for funded community organizations to reach out to agencies and identify other partners to take advantage of existing outreach avenues and broaden the scope of impact.

Attracting low-income customers to markets by raising awareness, providing adequate vendor training on accepting nutrition assistance benefits, having consistent and well-trained staff, and covering ongoing operating costs of EBT machines are all challenges that FMPP grants have been used to address to improve access to fresh food.
In addition to purchasing needed equipment, amenities, and signage, FMPP grant outcomes include forging partnerships, creating strategic plans, building volunteer bases, and planning for the creation of new market outlets. Though these outcomes are often not explicit objectives in the proposal, among the proudest accomplishments stated by many grantees are those related to improved organizational stability. For example, one grantee stated that with FMPP support, their organization “was able to create a business plan that will allow us to not rely on grant funding as of Q4 FY2013.” Another stated that “the FMPP funding permitted us to secure additional funding and leverage a second farmers market site in two neighboring communities.”

**MARKET IMPROVEMENTS**

Among the more than half of respondents (122) who used FMPP funding to make improvements to their market or outlet, the most frequently cited improvement was permanent signage (64, or 52 percent). Nineteen percent (23) conducted governance or board-development activities, and 9 percent (11) pursued formal legal status for their market organization. Physical site improvements such as seating (14, 11 percent), electricity (9), and bathrooms (8) were also improved or added through FMPP funding. Nearly half of respondents (60) noted “other” improvements, including commercial kitchen equipment, cold storage, computers, website improvements, EBT technology, staffing, canopies, tables, and other training and supplies.

One respondent identified their proudest grant accomplishment as a combination of the “provision of signage, folding chairs and tables, canopy tents, and development of online marketing for rural producers.” Another grantee noted that their “success with USDA FMPP provided the experience and confidence needed to secure a 501(c)(3) nonprofit designation for our market and to leverage an additional $302,498 toward construction of a permanent market facility.”
It is important to note that several grantees focused less on local market activities and more on improving the capacity of markets and other local food operations. Sixty percent (98) reported conducting farmer and vendor training or conferences, and 43 percent (69) conducted market manager workshops or conferences.

NEW PARTNERSHIPS WITH OTHER ORGANIZATIONS OR AGENCIES

An overwhelming majority (157, 86 percent) of respondents reported that FMPP funds helped their organizations establish new partnerships with other organizations or agencies in their communities to carry out project goals of mutual interest and maximize the use of existing resources.

Responses were ranked using a likert scale, with 2 representing much stronger relationships and -2 representing much weaker relationships. On average, responses indicate that, of all relevant stakeholders, relationships with farmers strengthened the most. Results indicate that many grantees were able to make strides toward strengthening relationships with entities that could lead to partnerships or support in the future, even if they were not yet able to formalize new partnerships.

**figure four**

*GRANTEE CHANGE IN RELATIONSHIP WITH VARIOUS ENTITIES [from -2 (much weaker) to 2 (much stronger)]*
BUILDING ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

Nearly all responding grantees (175, or 94 percent) felt that their organization was stronger today as a result of the FMPP grant. The majority specified that it was much stronger, with more stable personnel and funding, improved governance and policies, or increased membership.

STAFFING AND VOLUNTEER INVOLVEMENT

Farmers Market Promotion Program grants often provide funds for staffing to carry out the activities proposed in the grant application. Fifty-four percent (97) of respondents were able to add hours for an existing employee, and 47 percent (85) were able to add new staff members to the organization, mostly in part-time roles. Specifically, FMPP funds were able to support part-time staff for 78 percent of those who hired new personnel, most often only one part-time position. Eighty-eight percent (73) of those reporting the addition of new staff with FMPP funds say that these positions still existed in 2012. Farmers markets and other community-based programs are successful because of the active involvement of volunteers and partner organizations.

Farmers markets offer various avenues for volunteerism that engage their surrounding populations and create vital community buy-in. According to the USDA Farmers Market Manager Survey, 63 percent of markets were managed by unpaid volunteers in 2005. In accordance with the trend, a majority of grantee respondents (128, or 71 percent) in some way relied on volunteers to carry out program activities (including both regular and one-time-only volunteers) to execute their FMPP projects. Seventy-seven percent (136) report that their FMPP projects increased volunteer participation. This includes 49 grantees whose volunteer participation significantly increased.
LEVERAGE OF ADDITIONAL FINANCIAL RESOURCES

For 42 percent of respondents (76), FMPP was their first government grant. Although how this rate compares to other USDA grants is unknown, it appears to reinforce anecdotal evidence that many of the organizations funded by the program have little previous grant-writing experience. A higher percentage (113, or 61 percent) said that since receiving their FMPP award they have applied for other federal grants, though only 59 percent of them reported having received such funding.

When asked specifically whether their FMPP grant helped their organization leverage other financial resources, private foundation funds were the most common source for leveraged funding (69, 38 percent). Other federal grants were leveraged by 23 percent, followed closely by private business sponsorships (22 percent), state grants (21 percent), and city grants (16 percent). Other cited funds leveraged include county funds, sponsorships, and individual donations. There is no difference in the average FMPP grant amount between those who reported leveraging two or more funding sources and the overall respondent population.

**table five**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FUNDING SOURCES</th>
<th>COUNT</th>
<th>PERCENTAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FEDERAL GRANTS</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRIVATE FOUNDATION FUNDS</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRIVATE BUSINESS SPONSORSHIPS</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STATE GRANTS</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CITY GRANTS</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OTHER FUNDS</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NO ADDITIONAL FUNDS ACQUIRED</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL RESPONDENTS</td>
<td>180</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CONFIDENCE IN PREPARING FUTURE GRANT PROPOSALS

According to survey results, FMPP grants also provide grant-preparation experience that encourages the confidence to seek funding elsewhere to support new projects. When asked if they felt more or less confident preparing a grant proposal as a result of receiving and administering the FMPP grant, eighty-six percent (160) reported that they felt more confident to prepare a future grant proposal.

**CONFIDENCE IN PREPARING GRANT PROPOSALS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CONFIDENCE PREPARING GRANT PROPOSALS</th>
<th>COUNT</th>
<th>PERCENTAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MUCH MORE CONFIDENT</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOMEWHAT MORE CONFIDENT</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NO MORE OR LESS CONFIDENT</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOMEWHAT LESS CONFIDENT</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MUCH LESS CONFIDENT</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL RESPONDENTS</td>
<td>180</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

136 respondents to the question reported that their FMPP projects increased volunteer participation.
DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS ABOUT INFRASTRUCTURE AND CAPACITY BUILDING

Sixty-two respondents elaborated on elements of capacity building supported by FMPP funds. Sustainability emerged as a common theme, associated with operational changes (longer operating hours, longer growing seasons, winter markets to include value-added products), and administrative changes (hiring staff to oversee volunteers, train vendors, and manage equipment such as EBT machines). Grantees often emphasized that experiencing market management, creating lasting partnerships, and securing other funding sources are all critical to market and project sustainability. Comments suggest that grantees identify team-building, collaboration, relationships, and networks as crucial to lasting success of the programs initiated by FMPP.

For those working at the state or regional level, FMPP funds could be used specifically to build governance, management, and producer capacity, accelerating broader impacts. “We used the grant to create a strategic plan and develop an experienced market manager’s toolkit. Both have helped us develop internal controls and procedures, [and] protocols for board expectations.”

Another grantee described how the FMPP grant supported the development of a statewide association, allowing it “to hire its first staff person and launch what was an informal group of committed volunteers into a statewide organization. . . . This has expedited the organization’s relationships with markets, nonprofits, and government, allowing us to achieve success and positioning us to become a vibrant organization. This would not have been possible without the initial assistance of FMPP funds.”
Professional development and training activities are common components of FMPP-funded projects.

EDUCATIONAL EVENTS HOSTED

Many FMPP awards (162) supported training and educational events for producers, market managers, customers, and the community at large. The most frequently cited educational activity conducted by grantees was farmer education in the form of business, marketing, and food safety training (98, or 60 percent), followed by food preparation and nutrition classes and demonstrations (85, 52 percent) for community members. Market manager education (such as EBT and leadership training and handbooks) was provided by 69 responding grantees (43 percent). Agricultural education was offered in the form of farm tours (50, 31 percent) and gardening, beekeeping, or composting clinics (48, 30 percent). General community education events like food-related film screenings, book signings, or health screening were offered by 18 responding grantees (11 percent).

Statistical analysis using an ordinary least squares regression shows that there is a strong correlation between the change in vendor sales since receiving the FMPP grant and how FMPP funds were used. In particular, funds used for manager training initiatives correlated with a greater increase in producer sales (at 94% significance), suggesting that using FMPP funds to host trainings for managers accounts for a $85,366.38 increase in reported producer sales.
PROJECT SUPPORT FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF A FARMERS MARKET ASSOCIATION OR NETWORK

Slightly more than one third of responding grantees (62) used FMPP funds for the development of a farmers market association or network. This includes local, regional, state, and national networks, with most being local or regional.

PROJECT SUPPORT FOR THE TRAINING OF STAFF OR VOLUNTEERS

Sixty percent of 183 responding grantees (110) said that their FMPP funding supported training for staff and volunteers. This result reinforces grantee comments stressing the need for more consistency in human resources to carry out grant activities.
PRODUCER LEADERSHIP AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

In addition to income opportunities, direct-marketing outlets may also offer agricultural producers unique opportunities for participation in market-related and other community activities. Grantees were asked in the survey if producers were more visible and active in the community since the FMPP was awarded. One hundred forty-two survey-takers cited evidence of community involvement and leadership. The most frequently observed leadership activity was mentoring other producers (94, or 66 percent), followed closely by interviews with the media (93, 65 percent). Forty-six percent of responding grantees (65) said producers taught at workshops, and nearly 40 percent (55) noted that producers were now participating in the organization’s governance. Sixteen grantees (11 percent) noted that their producers had written letters to the editor since the grant was awarded. School visits, donations to food banks, serving on food policy councils, and other community activities were also cited as evidence of producer engagement and leadership.

Only a small percentage of grantees (7, 4 percent) said that there were now farmers market or local food distribution activities occurring on federally owned property as a result of their FMPP grant.

data table eight

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EVIDENCE OF PRODUCERS’ COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT</th>
<th>COUNT</th>
<th>PERCENTAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>INTERVIEWS WITH THE MEDIA</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PARTICIPATION IN YOUR ORGANIZATION’S GOVERNANCE</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TEACHING A WORKSHOP</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WRITING LETTERS TO THE EDITOR</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MENTORING OTHER PRODUCERS</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OTHER (PARTICIPATION IN FOOD/FARM EDUCATION PROGRAMS (INCLUDING SCHOOL VISITS), DONATING PRODUCT TO FOOD BANKS, SERVING ON FOOD POLICY COUNCILS, ETC.)</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL RESPONDENTS</td>
<td>142</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS
ABOUT PROFESSIONAL AND
CAREER DEVELOPMENT

Forty-two respondents offered comments on the role of professional and career development in their grant activities, revealing the significance of human resources in the long-term success of FMPP-funded programs.

Providing training for farmers and other vendors is the single biggest target of professional development, with grantees frequently conducting training for farmers and other vendors on business management, season extension techniques, sales strategies, food safety protocol, and EBT acceptance. One respondent commented, "As a result of our FMPP, farmers are now mentoring other farmers at the markets, increasing the number of markets and the revenue at each market." Another grantee, operating an urban farm in a low-income west Philadelphia neighborhood, said that FMPP funds helped the farm act as "an incubator for individuals looking to develop their farming skills. Over the past two years we have employed three farmers. This coincides with our youth program that focuses on urban agriculture and leadership."

Grantees recognize that both producer and manager interests are tied to educating consumers through nutrition and cooking classes and demonstrations, and other audience-specific skill-building events.

At the market organizational level, professional development efforts were often targeted to hiring and training staff, and offering state or regional training for market managers via conferences. Training on EBT acceptance appeared to be a common workshop topic.

One grantee from a newly developed state farmers market association projected that "in the years to come, we will be developing statewide market manager training after assisting markets with expanding revenue streams to allow for hired staff positions."
In the final section of the survey, grantees were asked a variety of questions about their overall experience as a grantee, their accomplishments, and the grant application process and administration.

**PROUDEST ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

A significant majority of respondents (167) provided comments on their grant’s proudest accomplishments. It was here that many grantees were prompted to discuss their bottom-line successes related to the activities funded by FMPP. Some cited outputs of their grant project, while others observed broader community outcomes. The most commonly cited accomplishments included establishing new markets, expanding markets or extending the season, training farmers, and increasing awareness among the general public.

Increasing the number of customers in order to increase revenue to vendors was a priority for many projects, as stated by one grantee, who reported that their “customer base has increased so Wednesday sales were as good or better for farmers than Saturday sales.” Establishing and strengthening relationships with farmers appeared to be key to understanding their specific business needs and providing services accordingly. One grantee described outcomes of her organization’s grant:

“Our farmers know post-harvest handling, grading, bunching, packaging, cooling, [and] presentation. They know how to present harvest estimates, receive purchase orders, create invoices, and record payments. They know and practice food safety. They are all certified organic. I am proudest of the accomplishments of our farmers in building their own direct markets.”
Overcoming socioeconomic barriers and stereotypes was a source of pride for many respondents, including one who claimed as their proudest accomplishment “bringing first-time SNAP and WIC customers to the market, observing them getting over their initial hesitancy to participate.” Though many grantees clearly succeeded in improving access and increasing participation among nutrition program customers, there was less agreement about whether such qualitative gains will be reflected in their vendors’ bottom lines.

A number of grantees were able to create manager or farmer associations, facilitate conferences, and partner with nonprofit organizations as gateways to additional funding sources. One grantee in Michigan, among the 34 percent using FMPP funds to develop or support a statewide association or network, implemented the “first market manager certificate program in the country,” which has “certified 65 market managers.”

**Allocation of Grant Resources**

When asked if they would allocate grant resources differently if they could manage their grant all over again, nearly half (85, or 46 percent) said no, 24 percent (44) said yes, and 16 percent (29) were unsure. Commenters suggested that they would have allocated more funding (or requested more funding) for staff, marketing, outreach, and printing costs. Reinforcing the fluid nature of community collaborations, some grantees explained that unexpected changes to partnerships or staff required them to change budget allocations mid-project. More than half (100, 56 percent) of respondents said their organization accomplished more activities with FMPP support than were projected in their initial plan of work.

**The Grant Process**

Grantee responses varied in questions of ease of application, flexibility of funds, reporting requirements, and helpfulness of the AMS FMPP staff. While several grantees felt that the time required for application, orientation, and reporting were excessive, others praised its flexibility (and in particular, the ability to use FMPP funds to procure equipment) and felt it had reasonable reporting requirements that “seemed designed to just assure FMPP that we were using the funds wisely.”

More than 80 percent of respondents (177) said that they would apply again to the Farmers Market Promotion Program, and some indicated their organizations had in fact already applied again. Slightly fewer (135) said that they would recommend FMPP to other eligible organizations.
FMPP grantees offered many positive comments about the flexibility of the program; they also praised it as a “unique source of funds for market development, [with] no matching funds required,” allowing for promotion “of the market itself rather than promoting specific items that may vary by grower.” Respondents recognized FMPP’s “potential to leverage some private and other state dollars” and as “good for building market coalitions.” Meeting a wide variety of needs requires flexibility, which one grantee in particular recognized as “very important so that we can implement a comprehensive program that trains producers, recruits producers and other vendors; organize the entertainment that brings people to the market; sign up senior citizens for SFMNP; train children and mentor them to have booths at the market; develop promotional materials; create ads and manage volunteers.”

Generally, grantees would strongly recommend the program to other eligible organizations with the caveat that applicants or their partners should possess sufficient capacity to carry out project deliverables.
EVALUATION

Data appears to be a critical missing piece within FMPP-funded organizations and throughout the sector at large. Better metrics are needed to track economic, social, and community impacts. Analysis of the survey responses revealed that some grantees lacked baseline data on certain key indicators. Standard measures that are applied to other retail sectors, such as jobs, gross sales, and consumer participation appear to be inadequate to capture the unique spectrum of economic, cultural, environmental, and health impacts of direct-to-consumer outlets like farmers markets.

A strongly stated desire for streamlined reporting does not appear at odds with what was also recognized by grantees as a need for “a clearly delineated expectation of metrics and outcomes.” It was clear in their comments that grantees were interested in seeing best practices and tools for capturing information on outcomes such as “increased sense of community, increased economic activity in local communities, jobs created and retained, increased knowledge of healthy eating by consumers, increased knowledge of community assets (local organizations that serve the community), and on and on.”

NETWORKS AND INFORMATION SHARING

Survey results illustrate FMPP’s success in opening channels of communication and building relationships between funded entities and their stakeholders. As one grantee noted, “our grant laid the foundation for greater communication among market managers, better understanding of SNAP, and more sharing of information across the state for farmers markets.”

The desire for improved networking and communication was voiced repeatedly from grantees seeking opportunities to learn how other projects are administered and how the revenue streams of peer organizations are developed to ensure that programs survive past grant funding. FMPP appears to serve as a testing ground for innovations that can benefit the sector at large.

CAPACITY BUILDING

FMPP grants have been successfully applied to forging partnerships, creating strategic plans, building volunteer bases, and planning for the creation of new market outlets.

FMPP was specifically cited by at least five respondents as a “catalyst” for market creation, partnership building, and training that has the potential to help grantees identify other revenue sources for sustainable operation after FMPP funding ends.
Based on survey results and analysis of the several hundred comments submitted by grantees, the data suggest that FMPP has yielded many benefits for the communities it has funded. Innovation, resourcefulness, and creativity appear to be the hallmark of successful farmers markets, and FMPP has played a role in fueling the development and enhancement of these and other similar community-based outlets that are marketing agricultural products directly to consumers.

Lessons learned about the activities and impacts of projects funded by the Farmers Market Promotion Program will likely influence the trajectory of farmers market growth and sustainability, as well as play a key role in the development of other complementary direct-to-consumer outlets. In looking toward the future, the ability of these enterprises to maximize farmer, consumer, and community outcomes will be strengthened by efforts to build networks, grow organizational capacity, and encourage ongoing evaluation of impacts.
01 marketumbrella.org


# Appendix A // Total FMPP Grants and Funding by Region, 2006-2012

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>REGION</th>
<th>NUMBER OF GRANTS AWARDED</th>
<th>TOTAL VALUE OF GRANT FUNDING</th>
<th>STATES INCLUDED</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FAR WEST</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>$6,095,016</td>
<td>ALASKA, CALIFORNIA, HAWAII, NEVADA, OREGON, AND WASHINGTON</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ROCKY MOUNTAIN</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>$2,420,968</td>
<td>ARIZONA, COLORADO, IDAHO, NEW MEXICO, MONTANA, UTAH, AND WYOMING</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOUTHWEST</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>$2,518,250</td>
<td>ARKANSAS, LOUISIANA, OKLAHOMA, AND TEXAS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NORTH CENTRAL</td>
<td>147</td>
<td>$7,424,115</td>
<td>ILLINOIS, INDIANA, IOWA, KANSAS, MICHIGAN, MINNESOTA, MISSOURI, NEBRASKA, NORTH DAKOTA, OHIO, SOUTH DAKOTA, AND WISCONSIN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOUTHEAST</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>$5,321,063</td>
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### Appendix B // Farmers Market Program Awards by State, 2006-2012

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<td><strong>109</strong></td>
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**Total Funding:**
- **FMPP Awards:** $32,286,123
- **New EBT Awards:** $5,596,821
- **Existing EBT Awards:** $3,088,282
# Appendix C // SNAP Redemption Trends at Farmers Markets, 2009-2012

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<tr>
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<td>187%</td>
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<tr>
<td>NH</td>
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<td>NJ</td>
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<tr>
<td>ND</td>
<td>$137,269</td>
<td>48 REDACTED</td>
<td>$35,817</td>
<td>$718,121</td>
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<td>OR</td>
<td>$24,405</td>
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<td>$16,020</td>
<td>574%</td>
</tr>
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<td>2081%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RI</td>
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<td>$35,817</td>
<td>$718,121</td>
<td>25 -81%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>1620%</td>
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<td>$16,020</td>
<td>574%</td>
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<tr>
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<td>574%</td>
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<tr>
<td>WV</td>
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<td>$3,071</td>
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<tr>
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<td>$77,042</td>
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</table>

Data provided from USDA Food and Nutrition Service Benefits Redemption Division

* No state-specific data provided in earlier years
SURVEY INTRO

Thank you in advance for taking the time to participate in this unprecedented research effort to understand the diversity of impacts supported through the Farmers Market Promotion Program. Your thoughtful and honest response as a past FMPP awardee is critically important, and we are grateful for your participation. We estimate that this survey should take you approximately 25–30 minutes, and if you find yourself needing to look up information or pause the survey, you will be able to save your input and return where you left off on another day.

Your responses will be kept confidential, though we may follow up with you via email or telephone for an interview and potential inclusion in a case study or video with your permission.

When taking this survey, think about your project’s baseline data before you were awarded your FMPP project. When considering change made possible through your FMPP grant funding, please consider where you are TODAY. If your project ended over a year ago, we hope that you will look at current data rather than simply what was submitted in your final report.

The FMPP supports a wide variety of projects, each with different activities and goals. We realize that not every question may apply to your project, and that you may not have answers for each question. Please respond as honestly, accurately, and thoroughly as possible, and feel free to share additional detail in the comment spaces provided at the end of each section.

Please complete this survey no later than October 31, 2012. Thank you.

SECTION ONE: BACKGROUND

1. To begin, please confirm your organization and contact information.
   Organization name:
   Your name:
   Your title/role:
   Your telephone number:
   Email address:
   Year organization was founded:

2. Where were your grant activities primarily targeted? (select all that apply)
   - Suburban area
   - Urban area
   - Rural area

3. In what ZIP Code were your grant activities primarily targeted (if applicable)?

4. Please select the level of grant involvement that best describes your organization’s role in the FMPP project:
   - We served as a nonprofit fiscal agent
   - We served as a government agency fiscal agent
   - We are the organization performing the bulk of all grant activity, without a fiscal agent
5. How many paid staff people (full or part-time) worked on local food or farmers market activities for your organization at the time your FMPP proposal was submitted?
   o 0
   o 1
   o 2
   o 3
   o 4
   o 5 or more

6. How did you use FMPP funds? (check all that apply)
   o EBT
   o Hiring staff
   o Marketing / advertisement / increasing market awareness
   o Farmer or vendor training
   o Market manager training
   o Development of a network of association

SECTION TWO: FARM IMPACTS

Please note: In this section, the term “producer” refers to a farmer, rancher, forager, or fisher—NOT bakers, craftsmen, resellers, or prepared ready-to-eat food vendors. “Vendors” applies to both agricultural producers and other kinds of vendors.

7. What percentage of vendors involved in your market activities are agricultural producers?
   o None
   o 1–20%
   o 21–40%
   o 41–60%
   o 61–80%
   o 81–100%

8. Please provide your best estimate of the number of agricultural producers selling at your market before your FMPP was awarded versus today. Estimated calculations are fine; if you don’t have an estimate, please select “Don’t know.”

   BEFORE FMPP  TODAY
   o 0–10
   o 11–20
   o 21–30
   o 31–40
   o 41–50
   o 51–60
   o 61–70
   o 71–80
   o 81–90
   o 91–100
   o More than 100
   o Don’t know (proceed to Q 9; all other responses skip to Q 10)
9. Based on your observations, how did the number of participating PRODUCERS change?
   o Significant increase in the number of participating producers
   o Slight increase in the number of participating producers
   o No change
   o Slight decrease in the number of participating producers
   o Significant decrease in the number of participating producers

10. Please provide your best estimate of total annual vendor sales before your FMPP was awarded versus today. Estimated calculations are fine; if you don’t have an estimate, please select “Don’t know.”

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<th>TODAY</th>
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<tr>
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<td>$1,200,001–$1,300,000</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

11. Since your FMPP grant was awarded, compared to today, how would you describe changes in average per vendor sales?

   o Increased more than 100%
   o Increased 76 to 100%
   o Increased 51–75%
   o Increased 26–50%
   o Increased 1–25%
   o No change
   o Decreased 1–25%
   o Decreased 26–50%
   o Decreased 51–75%
   o Decreased 76 to 100%
   o Decreased more than 100%
   o Don’t know
12. Since your FMPP grant was awarded, compared to today, have you observed changes to the total number of VENDOR staff involved in market sales (in other words, did existing vendors staff their booths with additional personnel)?
   o No change
   o 1–2 additional staff
   o 3–4 additional staff
   o 5–6 additional staff
   o 7–8 additional staff
   o 9–10 additional staff
   o More than 10 additional staff

13. Since your FMPP grant was awarded, compared to today, how would you describe changes in the number of different types of locally produced farm products available (think of types of crops [e.g., tomatoes] as well as varieties of crops [e.g., Brandywine, Cherokee Purple, etc.])
   o Significant increase in the number of types of farm products available
   o Slight increase in the number of types of farm products available
   o No change
   o Slight decrease in the number of types of farm products available
   o Significant decrease in the number of types of farm products available

Comments about farm impacts: Open-ended text box

SECTION THREE: MARKET PROMOTION AND DEVELOPMENT

14. If you used FMPP funds for advertising and outreach, please tell us the number of times the following activities or strategies were used:
   o Events and activities in the neighborhood, outside of market hours:
   o Cooking classes or nutritional awareness courses:
   o Posters, flyers, or billboards:
   o Social media campaigns:
   o Permanent signage at or around the market site:
   o Use of radio or television advertisements:
   o Other promotional activities designed to increase customer participation (please specify):

15. Since receiving the FMPP grant, has the average visitor count:
   o Increased more than 100%
   o Increased 76 to 100%
   o Increased 51–75%
   o Increased 26–50%
   o Increased 1–25%
   o No change
   o Decreased 1-25%
   o Decreased 26–50%
   o Decreased 51–75%
   o Decreased 76 to 100%
   o Decreased more than 100%
   o Don’t know
16. As a result of your FMPP activities,
   a. How has the number of first-time customers increased or decreased?
      o Significantly increased
      o Somewhat increased
      o No change
      o Somewhat decreased
      o Significantly decreased
   b. How many vendors now have products featured in retail stores, restaurants, or other businesses/institutions?
      o 0
      o 1–2
      o 3–4
      o 4–5
      o 5–6
      o 7–8
      o 9–10
      o More than 10

17. Comparing before and after your grant, was there an increase in the number of days per week that your market was open for business?
   o Yes
   o No

18. Comparing before and after your grant, did your operation increase the number of weeks during the year that it was open for business?
   o Yes
   o No

Comments about Market Promotion and Development: Open-ended text box

SECTION FOUR: FOOD ACCESS

19. Were your grant activities directed towards improving fresh food access in food deserts?
   o Yes
   o No

20. Did you use FMPP funds to expand outreach to vulnerable consumers (low-income families and individuals participating in federal programs like SNAP or WIC)?
    o Yes
    o No

21. If you used FMPP funds for EBT, did they: (select all that apply)
    o Fund installation of a single EBT machine
    o Facilitate outreach to ethnic minorities or low-income groups
    o Help vendors accept payment
    o Leverage other funds for fruit and vegetables incentive programs
    o Train market staff in the implementation of SNAP EBT
    o We did not use any portion of grant funding specifically for EBT

22. Did you use FMPP funds to open a new market or food distribution outlet in a different neighborhood in order to serve vulnerable populations?
    o Yes
    o No (skip to Q 24)

23. Does that new market/outlet exist today?
    o Yes
    o No
24. Since your FMPP grant was awarded,
a. Have you seen a change in the amount of SNAP sales?
   o Significantly increased
   o Somewhat increased
   o No changes noticed
   o Somewhat decreased
   o Significantly decreased
   o Not applicable

b. Have you observed an increase in the number of producers participating in SNAP/EBT as customers?
   o Yes
   o No
   o Not sure

c. Has the socioeconomic diversity of your shopper base increased or decreased?
   o Significantly increased
   o Somewhat increased
   o No changes noticed
   o Somewhat decreased
   o Significantly decreased

d. Has that change been sustained since the ending of the grant?
   o Yes
   o No
   o Not sure

25. Has there been a change in the return rate of:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SNAP/EBT SHOPPERS?</th>
<th>YES</th>
<th>NO</th>
<th>NOT APPLICABLE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WIC FMNP SHOPPERS?</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SENIOR FMNP SHOPPERS?</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Comments about Food Access: Open-ended text box

SECTION FIVE: INFRASTRUCTURE AND CAPACITY BUILDING

26. Did your organization use FMPP funding to make any of the following market improvements?
   o Electricity
   o Permanent signage
   o Bathrooms
   o Seating
   o Board development
   o Pursue formal legal status for market
   o Other (please specify):
   o None of the above

27. As a result of this FMPP grant, did your organization establish new partnerships with other organizations or agencies in the community (for example, county extension, business council, school, food bank, city government, etc.)?
   o Yes
   o No
28. In comparing today with before your FMPP activities, how would you generally characterize your relationship with the following entities?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Entity</th>
<th>Much Stronger</th>
<th>Somewhat Stronger</th>
<th>No Change</th>
<th>Somewhat Weaker</th>
<th>Much Weaker</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>City Government</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>State Government</td>
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<tr>
<td>Community Nonprofits</td>
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<tr>
<td>Media Outlets</td>
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<tr>
<td>Farmers</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

29. As a result of the FMPP grant,
   a. Did your organization add hours for an existing employee?
      o Yes
      o No
   b. Did your organization add new staff?
      o Yes
      o No (skip to Q 32)

30. How many new staff people did the grant help support?
   o One half-time staff person
   o One full-time staff person
   o Two or more half-time staff persons
   o Two or more full-time staff persons

31. Are those staff still employed with you today?
   o Yes
   o No

32. Did your project rely on volunteer staffing (including regular and one-time only volunteers)?
   o Yes
   o No

33. Did your project increase volunteer participation?
   o Significantly increased
   o Somewhat increased
   o No change
   o Somewhat decreased
   o Significantly decreased

34. Since your FMPP grant was awarded, has your market project
   a. Increased its days of operation during the week?
      o Yes
      o No
   b. Increased in number of weeks?
      o Yes
      o No

35. Was the FMPP grant your first government grant?
   o Yes
   o No
36. Did receiving this FMPP grant help you leverage additional financial resources? (select all that apply)
   o Federal grants
   o Private foundation funds
   o Private business sponsorships
   o State grants
   o City grants
   o Other funds: please explain
   o No additional funds acquired

37. Since receiving and administering this grant, do you feel more or less confident preparing a grant proposal?
   o Much more confident
   o Somewhat more confident
   o No more or less confident
   o Somewhat less confident
   o Much less confident

38. Have you applied for additional federal funding since receiving the FMPP grant?
   o Yes
   o No (skip to Q 40)

39. Did you receive that proposed funding?
   o Yes
   o No

40. Do you feel that your organization is stronger or weaker than it was the day you submitted your FMPP proposal? (Note: “stronger” may be characterized by more stable personnel, funding, improved governance, development of policies, increase in members, etc.)
   o Much stronger
   o Somewhat stronger
   o No change
   o Somewhat weaker
   o Much weaker

41. Since beginning your FMPP project, have you observed an increase in vendor participation in USDA programs (e.g., USDA programs, such as SARE, VAPG, Specialty Crop grants, NRCS Conservation programs?)
   o Yes
   o No
   o Not sure

Comments about Infrastructure and Capacity Building: Open-ended text box

SECTION SIX: PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT/ CAREER DEVELOPMENT

42. With FMPP support, what if any educational events did your organization host? (check box)
   o Farmer trainings/conferences
   o Market manager trainings/conferences
   o Food related film screenings/book signings
   o Cooking/food preservation demonstrations or classes
   o Gardening/beekeeping composting clinics
   o Farm tours
   o Other: (please specify)

43. Did your project support the development of a farmers market association or network?
   o Yes
   o No

44. Did the FMPP support any training for your staff or volunteers?
   o Yes
   o No
45. Since your FMPP grant was awarded, are producers more visible and active in the community, exhibited by the following: (select all that apply)
   o Interviews with the media
   o Participation in your organization’s governance
   o Teaching a workshop
   o Writing a letters to the editor
   o Mentoring other producers
   o Other instances of community involvement: (please specify)

Comments about Professional Development and Career Development: Open-ended text box

SECTION SEVEN: GRANT PROCESS

46. In reflecting on the process of your FMPP grant, how satisfied were you with the following?:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ability to Interact with FMPP Staff</th>
<th>Very Satisfied</th>
<th>Somewhat Satisfied</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Somewhat Dissatisfied</th>
<th>Very Dissatisfied</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Efficiency of Payment Process</td>
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<td>Clarity of Expectations for Reporting</td>
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<tr>
<td>Training on Use of Req’d Forms and Deadlines</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ability to Find Info About Other FMPP Grants</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

47. Did your organization accomplish additional activities with FMPP support that were not part of your initial plan of work?
   o Yes
   o No

48. When thinking of how you used your FMPP funding, what accomplishments are you proudest of? Open-ended text box

49. If you could do it all over again, would you allocate grant resources differently?
   o Yes
   o No
   o Not sure
   o Comment:

50. Would you apply again to the Farmers Market Promotion Program? Why or why not? Open-ended text box

51. Think about the time that was invested in writing your proposal and administering the grant during the project period. Would you recommend this funding source to other organizations that qualify? Why or why not? Open-ended text box

Comments about Grant process: Open-ended text box

52. What else would help inform us of the effectiveness of FMPP that our questions did not capture? Please use this space to elaborate on ways the FMPP improved your community that our survey did not specifically address. Open-ended text box
The Farmers Market Coalition (FMC) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization established with mission to strengthen farmers markets for the benefits of farmers, consumers, and communities. Learn more at www.farmersmarketcoalition.org.

Market Umbrella is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization devoted to cultivating the field of public markets for public good. Learn more at www.marketumbrella.org.