### **Small Farms Program**

#  Project Work Teams

# Final Project Report Form 2012

**Deadline:** October 31, 2012

Your Small Farm Program Grant*, is almost through the funding cycle. P*lease use this form to prepare your final report and submit in a word document to Matthew Goldfarb mg682@cornell.edu

We have created a web page dedicated to your projects at: <http://smallfarms.cornell.edu/projects/grants> We will post your reports in addition to any outreach materials.

1. Describe project activities and partner involvement:

This project is part 2 of a study funded by the Cornell Small Farms Program in 2011 where 19 NY Distribution companies were interviewed to assess their experiences purchasing from NY farmers. The intention of this study was to interview farmers who have established sales relationships with the distribution companies that were interviewed in 2011 by Rebecca Jablonski. Each of the distributors was asked to provide the names of 3-5 farmers who are their regular suppliers of NY products. Each farmer was then sent a survey developed by the project team. The survey included a total of 29 questions that followed a similar line of questioning as the distributor interview questions. (See appendix for survey).

A total of 75 farmers were sent the survey questionnaire. These farmer names were supplied by 11 out of 19 of the distributors interviewed last summer. Some distributors failed to provide farmer names or were hard to reach. Also, since Regional Access was already being studied as part of a larger project, we did not ask them for farmer names, however 2 of the farmers who completed surveys happen utilize Regional Access for farm product distribution.

Partners involved in this project:

Project Team and Staff

Monika Roth, Ag Program Leader, CCE Tompkins

Matthew LeRoux, Ag Marketing Educator, South Central NY Ag Team

Avi Miner, project assistant, CCE Tompkins

Rebecca Jablonski, Cornell City & Regional Planning Graduate Student

Molly Riordan, Cornell City & Regional Planning Graduate Student (working with Becca)

Sarah Brannen, Hudson Valley Food Study

Advisors

Todd Schmidt, Cornell Applied Economics & Management faculty

Farmers & Distributors are listed on the attached survey results document.

1. Describe any outcomes from these activities

Milestones:

1. Survey instrument reviewed multiple times and final document prepared
2. All Distributors contacted by email and follow-up phone to request farmer supplier names
3. A total of 11 distributors provided 75 farmer names
4. Survey and cover letter sent to farmers via email/snail mail
5. Follow up phone calls
6. A total of 10 surveys were returned (given that the survey was being administered during the growing season, we found it challenging to reach farmers and get them to return the survey).
7. Surveys received to date tabulated (we are encouraging farmers to complete the survey even though the grant period is over)
8. Data summarized. Some preliminary comparison with the distributor interviews made.
9. Data could be compared with other studies – Sarah Brannen, Hudson Valley Food Hub
10. Key insights recommendations for further work; farmer recommendations/distributor recommendations
11. Small Farm Quarterly article to be written for the Winter SFQ issue
12. Four case studies to be written (based on surveys returned, we may be able to squeeze 2 from the data we have)
13. Describe any activities, plans, or other projects that have resulted from your efforts through this grant.

-We are seeking additional surveys in order to produce more robust results.

-It appears that regulatory barriers, in particular GAP certification, is not going away and that both advocacy for common standards is needed along with buyer and farmer education.

-Marketing costs for farmers using multiple distributors and channels vs one or two distributors and channels would be interesting to study.

1. Describe any outreach activities completed (print materials, links, videos, or press):

Direct outreach to distributors.

Survey & cover letter mailed to farmers (attached)

No other materials developed at this time.

1. Do you have any additional project materials to share? (Evaluation summaries or PowerPoint presentations?)

Not yet.

1. How successful do you think you were in achieving your intended outcomes? What lessons can you share? Keys to success? Pitfalls? (include any evaluation forms used)

Success in achieving intended outcomes:

-our goal was to develop a survey instrument that would enable us to gather information from farmers about their wholesale distribution successes and challenges. The survey instrument was fairly effective in eliciting useful information and insights. We received information from 10 producers and even though the sample was small, it provided sufficient insights to build upon. See attached results.

Lessons learned:

-a key challenge was getting names of farmers from distributors

-getting farmers to complete the survey during summer (would be easier to administer this survey in winter!!)

-mail surveys seemed to get a higher response than email

-phone interviews were not possible given that farmers had limited time to give (even though the survey was short)

-our employee, while not shy about making phone calls, was less comfortable with the audience and subject matter and therefore not as effective as Matt or Monika in contacting distributors and farmers

**Cornell Small Farm Program**

**Work Team Participation Form**

Please list names and contact information for those who participated in your project (sign up sheets may be attached, if available).

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Name** | **Phone** | **Address** | **Email** | **Role (participant, planning team, speaker, etc)** |
| Monika Roth | 607-272-2292 | 615 Willow Ave. Ithaca 14850 | Mr55@cornell.edu | Planning team |
| Matt LeRoux | Same as above | Same as above | Mnl28@cornell.edu | Planning team |
| Avram Miner | Same as above | Same as above | Avram.miner@gmail.com | Staff assistant |
| Rebecca Jablonski | 215-817-2566 | Sibley Hall, Room 314 | Rb223@cornell.edu | Planning team |
| Molly Riordan |  |  |  | Working w/Becca |
| Sarah Brannen |  |  |  | Conducting similar farmer survey |