### **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](mailto:mg682@cornell.edu)

\*Reminder: Projects must be completed by September 30th and all invoices submitted by September 20th.

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:

Our activities centered on bringing the website, [www.sheepgoatmarketing.info](http://www.sheepgoatmarketing.info), back to Cornell and renovating/improving the site. We had to convert the site to software that was compatible with the Cornell Animal Science website, update the Marketing Directory and the Educational Section, reinstate an interactive Producer Directory and create an on-line “classified ad” section where producers could list market animals they had for sale and buyers could list market orders they had for market animals. **Linda Poppleton**, the Animal Science Webmaster, did the majority of the computer programming to make this move possible. The hours needed for the conversion and for developing the on-line Producer Directory and Classified Ad/Market Order section were far more than anticipated and Linda ended up volunteering about 2/3rds of the hours she has put into the project thus far.

**Robin Cheung**, farm intern at Apple Pond Farm, worked slightly fewer hours than anticipated because the computer programing was more challenging than initially thought. He contacted about 300 businesses listed in the original Marketing Directory and either updated or deleted their listings resulting in a current Marketing Directory of 275 businesses including livestock dealers, auction houses, USDA processors, wholesale meat packers, haulers, etc.

The Education Section needed much more updating than anticipated and **tatiana Stanton**, Cornell small ruminant extension specialist, volunteered many hours updating 23 articles in the Education section and adding 10 more articles. We want to 1) complete the updates to the Education section (5 more articles to update and 2 more marketing spreadsheets to add) and 2) fix a glitch in the Classified Ad section that causes farmers to have difficulty reporting the dates market animals will be ready for processing. When these two tasks are completed, **Sonja Hedlund**, co-owner Apple Pond Farm, will conduct extensive outreach to publicize the website. We also have a mailing ready (labeled and postage attached) to go out to the 275 businesses currently listed in our Marketing Directory announcing how they can use the website to locate market animals to purchase, but again are waiting until we have completed the two tasks listed above prior to sending out this mailing.

Publicity thus far has consisted of announcing the website to the 364 members of the Cornell Small Ruminant Marketing Listserv on September 3, 2012 and asking them for their suggestions and feedback. We were able to implement their suggestions for improving the directions on registering to use the website’s Producer Directory and Classified Ad section. However, several of their suggestions on improving the layouts of the Producer Directory and Classified Ad section and on making it easier for farmers to list their information were excellent but will require several more hours of software programming that we currently do not have available. The Fall 2012 edition on the Small Farms Quarterly also featured a “Resource Spotlight” about the website and a second announcement was also included in the quarterly “Sheep & Goat” edition of Country Folks Magazine. The 180 participants in the 2012 Cornell Sheep and Goat Symposium on October 27, 2012 received a full page announcement about the renovated website in their symposium folders. **Michael Thonney**, Director of the Cornell Sheep Program, has also announced the website at several national animal science meetings he has attended while on sabbatical this summer and fall.

1. Describe any outcomes from these activities

Thus far, there are 45 legitimate registered users for [www.sheepgoatmarketing.info](http://www.sheepgoatmarketing.info). Approximately 38 farmers have listed their farms in the Producer Directory. Currently, 714 market animals are listed for sale in the Classified Ad/Market Order section representing 17 farmers or order buyers. We did not add Google Analytics software to the website until September 19, 2012. The site has had 1463 unique visitors from 9/19/2012 to 11/04/2012. We would like to improve the layout of both the Producer Directory and the Classified Ad/Market Order section prior to the Easter Holidays when we anticipate an increased interest in the site as farmers start to sell Easter lambs and kids and buyers try to fill market orders. At that time we will again publicize the site to sheep and goat farmers and buyers to increase listings in both the Producer Directory and Classified Ad/Market Order section and try to evaluate the impact of such listings on assisting farmers to market their lambs and goat kids.

1. Describe any activities, plans, or other projects that have resulted from your efforts through this grant.

Empire Livestock LLC has asked us to advertise their Christmas Lamb and Kid Sale at their Dryden sales barn on the site. We have also talked with Dr. Cindi Shelley at SUNY Cobleskill about featuring in our Education section a set of educational videos she developed on lamb processing during her sabbatical this fall. We are also obtaining permission from Matt LeRoux, Marketing Specialist Tompkins County Cornell Cooperative Extension, to list in the Education section some of the marketing tools he has developed for livestock farmers that are applicable to sheep and goat producers.

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

The Education section of [www.sheepgoatmarketing.info](http://www.sheepgoatmarketing.info) now contains a very well-rounded, up-to-date collection of articles and spread sheets to assist farmers to market lambs and goats for the meat market.

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

While we have asked farmers for feedback about the web site we have not conducted any formal evaluations at this time.

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)

We were hoping to have 160 farmers list their farms and animals in the new interactive Producer Directory and Holiday Listing and expose themselves to new marketing opportunities with the end result that of at least 80 NE US Sheep and goat farmers that accessed the improved web site AND provided feedback to us, 75% would report increases in their earnings and/or marketing opportunities.

We have not had 160 farmers list their farms and animals yet. The process of transferring this website and particularly of converting it to an interactive site required far more programming than anticipated. In the past, we created “Holiday Listings” in the spring and fall that were large lists of lambs and goats that farmers had for sale at times of the year when market demand was high. We created these lists by having each farmer fill out a form listing the animals they anticipated having for sale during that season of the year. The farmers then emailed or surface mailed the forms back to us. We then compiled the forms and typed them into a table to post on the web and surface mail to buyers. The tables we created were very concise and easy for buyers to print off and read. We had to stop this process in 2004 because it was just too time consuming to do unless we could figure out a way for the tables to create and maintain themselves. This grant allowed us to attempt this changeover. Creating on-line forms that farmers can fill out by accessing the website and which are then programmed to produce the tables and/or directories ended up being was more time consuming than anticipated. Additionally, the resulting tables do not have as nice a layout as the tables we used to present to buyers nor does our Producer Directory result in as nice a layout as we used to obtain by doing a lot of the typing ourselves. We can improve these interactive forms, tables and directories but it will involve more time and funds for programming than initially estimated. Farmer feedback has been very helpful and on-target. We plan to work on implementing their suggestions over the winter and evaluate farmer usage and impact during 2013.

**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).

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
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