

Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection
Division of Marketing
Agricultural Development & Diversification Program (ADD)

2000 Grant Project Final Report

Contract Number: 15050

Grant Project Title: Statewide Marketing Program for Wisconsin Apple Growers

Project Beginning Date: 7/1/2000 Project End Date: 9/30/2001

Amount of Funding Awarded: \$19,595

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FINAL REPORT

Statewide Marketing Program for Wisconsin Apple Growers

ADD Contract Number: 15050 Purchase Order Number: AGA30000018

Project Description

This project had the following objectives:

1. Expand consumer awareness and support of Wisconsin's apple industry.
2. Increase the direct sales of Wisconsin apples and apple products.
3. Increase the profitability of individual apple growers.
4. Expand the apple industry in Wisconsin.

This statewide marketing program was to result in the following:

1. A statewide survey and analysis of what methods successful apple growers are utilizing to increase customer traffic and sales.
2. Interviews with growers, marketing specialists, etc. to identify partnering opportunities with organizations and businesses.
3. The development of standardized statewide marketing materials that could be personalized by individual growers to publicize local or statewide events.
4. The development of "Variety of the Week" information that can be used by orchards, the media, and others to promote apples.
5. The development of a "Farm Market Display Contest" that will encourage and promote good farm market displays.
6. The investigation and evaluation of sponsoring regional "apple festivals" that do not compete with existing well-established festivals.
7. The development of a direct marketing handbook to educate growers on the best marketing ideas gathered from the survey and interviews.
8. A statewide marketing symposium where the direct marketing handbook and materials would be distributed.

Summary of Project Accomplishments

Market expansion or development for agricultural products or technology or expanded distribution.

The majority of apples in Wisconsin are direct marketed from producer to consumer. The purpose of this grant was to educate producers about how to reach consumers better and to educate consumers about Wisconsin's apple industry so that current markets could be expanded and future markets would be developed.

This project helped growers develop skill sets that would enable them to attract more customers, increase revenue per customer visit, and increase the number of times each customer visits their market.

Evaluation and Description of the Results and Benefits of the Project, including meeting Original Expectations:

These responses are paired by number to the results expected listed on page 1.

1. Twenty-eight successful apple producers were interviewed and asked how they attracted consumers to their orchard or market; what they used to keep them at the market thereby capturing more consumer dollars; who did they target their marketing towards; when and how did they promote their market.
2. Partnering opportunities were explored with the Bed & Breakfast association, school FFA programs and several grocery store chains. It was discovered that a number of orchards are selling produce through local Fife's currently. It was determined that developing a relationship with any company or group would require the establishment of standards and a distribution system whereby we could assure quality and quantity of the produce. The association will continue to explore this opportunity but it will take longer than the length of this grant to get a system in place and a relationship established.
3. WAGA did work through the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction to offer the opportunity to High School Marketing classes to develop marketing materials to promote Wisconsin apples. We did offer cash prizes to the top 4 submissions. We were disappointed in the response. We had one high school from Appleton that submitted marketing projects. Copies of the projects, which received cash prizes, were submitted with a previous project report. The winning themes may be able to be used in a future marketing effort but further work would be needed to get the materials into a format that producers could use in their advertising.
4. Twelve "Variety of the Week" sheets were developed and distributed this fall. Statewide media received the weekly selections along with a listing of the apple orchards in Wisconsin. The Variety sheets were also distributed to apple growers so that they could be used in their local advertising. Copies of the Variety of the Week sheets were submitted with a previous progress report.
5. A Farm Market Display Contest was developed and promoted to orchards this fall. Submissions are due by December 15th. The purpose of this Contest is to promote improved markets and marketing displays. Cash prizes are offered as an incentive. Submissions will be used as examples in future marketing programs. The rules for the Farm Market Display Contest were submitted with a previous progress report.
6. We discovered that a number of orchards are doing their own apple festivals. Many feature special attractions on a specific weekend and are very successful in attracting a large number of customers. We included information on this in the "Special Promotions" section of the Marketing Directions handbook.
7. Using the information gathered from the grower surveys and the extensive knowledge of Bob Williams' years of working with growers, a "Marketing

Directions” handbook was created. This handbook covers the following topics: quality, signage, cleanliness, customer service, displays, media, recipes, special promotions, tie ins, education/promotion with schools, entertainment marketing, fairs, brochures to the internet, farmers markets, commodity associations, future trends, and government resources. The handbook includes photo sections, which give growers a visual image, as well as the written information. The handbook is housed in a ring binder so that it can be easily edited, expanded and updated. A copy of the handbook was previously submitted with a progress report.

8. The “Marketing Directions” handbook was distributed to growers at the Summer Apple Field Day, which was held in June at the Apple Holler Orchard in Sturtevant. 84 growers attended this Field Day. An additional 100 handbooks were mailed to grower members who were unable to attend the Field Day.

Future Projections

At the Wisconsin Fresh Fruit & Vegetable Conference Marketing Symposium being held January 6, 2002 in Green Bay, growers will be surveyed on how they used the materials developed through this grant. The survey will ask which materials were used, how they were used, and what impact they had on their overall operation. At that time we will also present the winners of the “Farm Market Display Contest” and display the materials they developed for the contest. The information obtained from this survey will be distributed to growers and a copy will be submitted to the Agriculture Development and Diversification program. The Wisconsin Apple Growers Association will continue to expand and develop materials and to work with growers to help them better market Wisconsin apples.

The apple producers of Wisconsin sincerely appreciate the investment the Agriculture Development and Diversification program made in our industry. This grant helped our industry begin a united marketing effort that will develop and expand in the coming years. Thank you for giving us this opportunity!