

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

2000 Grant Project Final Report

Contract Number: 15098

Grant Project Title: Farm City Market Basket

Project Beginning Date: July 2000 Project End Date: July 2001

Amount of Funding Awarded: \$34000

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Submitted by: Growing Power, Inc. Date: _____

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- 1) Describe the original intent of the grant project. How was it projected to benefit Wisconsin Agriculture?

Farm City Market Basket coordinates producers, consumers, and community-based organizations and businesses to develop an alternative distribution system for freshly grown Wisconsin produce. This project aims to meet the growing demand in the urban areas for locally grown and produced food, substituting inferior and expensive imports with locally grown produce.

Project objectives included:

- Developing a guaranteed market for small farmers
- Providing freshly grown produce to inner city areas of Wisconsin
- Educating the public on the value of supporting locally grown food
- Training inner-city youth and adults in food distribution and marketing
- Training small farmers in sustainable production and packaging practices marketable to urban areas
- Developing new markets among service providers in urban areas.
- Determining feasibility of wide-scale production and distribution.
- Replacing expensive, inferior imports with high quality, Wisconsin-grown produce.

Was it necessary to adjust the objectives during the project?

No

- 2) Describe the work conducted in this project. How did the grant funds assist you in this project?

This grant gave Growing Power the opportunity to establish **Market Basket** as a viable alternative marketing and distribution strategy that supports both disadvantaged WI farmers and consumers. The monies provided “people power” to outreach to disadvantaged consumers and producers both within the inner city of Milwaukee, where there is virtually no availability of fresh produce and to small farms statewide. Through Market Basket, Growing Power is educating the public on the real connections between the urban consumers and rural producers. “Poverty knows no boundary between city and country,” says Hope Finkelstein, Growing Power Co-Director. Market Basket provides a direct line between farmer and consumer creating a win-win situation. Urban consumers from low-income backgrounds have had the opportunity to purchase and eat fresh produce and WI grown meats like they have never before.

Small farmers have had the opportunity to market their products in a friendly and economically beneficial manner. The following farms are regular participating producers in the Market Basket program:

- Venneford Beef Farms; Clintonville, WI
- Grothkurth Farms: beef
- Yoder Farms (3 Amish families); Loyal, WI
- Byler Farms (2 Amish families); Loyal, WI
- Pinn-Oak Ridge Farms; pork; Delavan, WI
- Seligman Family Farms; cheese
- Wellspring Gardens; greens
- Cow Caviar; Mark McDonald

What successes did you achieve with this grant project?

Benefits to Farmers:

Will Allen, Growing Power Co-Director and farmer, reached out to farmers across the state. Many of these farmers were about to close their farms. Werner Grothkurth of Grothkurth farms, stated that Growing Power was “just about his last hope for surviving as a family farmer.” Other farmers including Mike McDonald of Cow Caviar and the Seligman Family have expressed similar sentiments. Farmers do not have the resources to do their own marketing especially to areas beyond their geographic region.

Statewide distribution of the market baskets through the Share program has offered tremendous opportunity for farmers. Numbers of baskets increase 4X once a month.

Benefits to consumers:

Market Basket has brought an abundance of fresh affordable food to people who previously only ate primarily corporately processed cuisine. Organizations like public schools are recognizing their role in supporting community food systems by their involvement with the Market Basket program.

What challenges did you face with your grant project?

The greatest challenge to this project has been transportation of goods. Consumers have increasingly been using our central site, the Growing Power Community Food Center, as a site to pick up their baskets. Costs for delivering throughout the city increase tremendously with the increase with the number of sites. This year we will increase the minimum number of baskets per site to cover our costs for delivery. On the producer side, few farmers have the resources to deliver their product to Milwaukee. This year we will develop a transportation plan that will coordinate the transfer of product from farm to the Growing Power Center and then to the community-based sites.

An additional challenge is that of managed growth for the program. In this demonstration phase we learned that we have the potential to increase our market exponentially for the product. But we are slowly building our capacity as a business to supply that demand. We need to have more time to train volunteers to pack the baskets so labor costs are kept to a minimum..

Our physical plant is slowly improving to meet the demand for inventory capacity. This grant allowed us to help lease a storage cooler which in the next year we hope to purchase.

3) Describe the public outreach efforts of this project. What literature or educational materials were produced through this project?

Market Basket brochures were printed and delivered throughout the city of Milwaukee and the state. Articles were printed in 4 Share e newsletters.

What presentations, field days or other events were given related to this project?

- the Growing Power Open house 10/00
- Community Food Security Coalition Conference in New Mexico 10/00
- Value Added conference in Eau Claire 1/01
- the Small Farmer Conference in Green Bay 2/01
- Growing Power growing together training 2/17-18/01
- Growing Together training 2/24-25/01
- the Midwest Organic Farmers Association 3/01
- Growing Together training 4/01

Kellogg Foundation Food and Society conference 4/01

What media outreach did you conduct through this project? Please identify specific papers or stations.

WI Agriview

Agday

WI Freeman

Newletters of Ald. Don Richards and County Supervisor Krug

4) Describe the results of this project. Did the grant project results meet your original expectations? Why or why not?

The results far outweighed our expectations. The demand for the program from both the consumer and producer sides have exceeded our capacity (which is a good thing). Farmers continually call and ask how to participate. Consumers are telling their friends and colleagues about the baskets. We have had to keep our numbers to a minimum in order to fill our orders in a timely fashion.

The following are numbers averaged on an annual basis.

Est. 100 baskets a week citywide

Est. 35 different sites including schools

Now featuring add on menu which includes meats and cheese

Statewide distribution through the SHARE farm fresh program; once a month 400 baskets

What new agricultural products, technologies or production methods were developed through this project?

The Market Basket program is an alternative method for marketing WI products. Consumers now have a choice than just what is on the shelves at their local convenience store. Farmers now have a choice to how they can market their products.

What did you learn from your grant project? What conclusions can you make?

Consumers and producers want and need choices for buying and selling food. Direct marketing is extremely valuable for both constituencies.

The participation of the State in this project has been very useful towards the success of this project. We have been able to leverage these monies for both private and public support for the program. As well, both farmers and consumers are happy to see the WI Dept. of Agriculture support such an alternative type of program. They have expressed the fact that they thought the State only supports large corporate farming. This project has given them new reason for hope.

How will the grant results affect your business?

The results have taught us to continue this project full steam ahead.

How will this project benefit the Wisconsin family farm?

More family farms will be able to stay in business.

What impact will this grant project have on the future of Wisconsin agriculture?

This project can help put urban agriculture onto the agenda for WI Agriculture and beyond. The diversity of farmers, farms, consumers and products abound in the State of WI. Growing Power can help reflect that diversity by distributing that message throughout the state and beyond.

How will the Wisconsin agriculture industry be able to use the information from this project?

Growing Power Farm City Market Basket program can be featured in any literature the “industry” produces with prior consent of Growing Power. Growing Power staff would be happy to discuss various means for t this information to be disseminated.

6) Include any other information you feel is appropriate.

(Examples: Samples of educational materials produced through this project
 Clippings and/or audio/video tapes
 What other research should be done to further this enterprise or activity?
 Can an industry leader make a statement as to the value of this grant project? etc.)