Indicators for FMLFPP Market Projects

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The list of outcomes and their indicators is from the achievability section of the narrative of the 2019 FMLFPP RFA and, according to some past FMPP reviewers, is one of the most reviewed sections of the entire proposal (besides the general focus, budget, appropriate length and necessary documents).

Outcome Indicators

Complete all applicable project Outcomes and Indicators with baseline and/or estimated realistic target numbers. If an outcome indicator does not apply, check N/A (Not Applicable) and briefly explain below the table why it is not applicable.

Outcome 1: To Increase Consumption of and Access to Locally and Regionally Produced Agricultural Products.

Indicator	Description	Estimated Number	N/A
1.a.	Total number of project beneficiaries/stakeholders reached		☐
1.b.	Of the total number that were reached, the number that reported buying, selling, aggregating, storing, producing, and/or distributing locally or regionally produced agriculture products		☐
1.c.	Of the total number that were reached, the number that gained knowledge on how to access, produce, prepare, and/or preserve locally and regionally produced agricultural products		☐

Outcome 2: To Increase Customers and Sales of Local and Regional Agricultural Products.

For projects that do not already have a baseline of sales in dollars or an initial customer count, one of the objectives of the project must be to determine such a baseline to meet the requirement and to document the value of sales increases or percent change in customer count by the end of the project.

Indicator	Description	Estimated Number	N/A
2.a.	**Sales increased as a result of marketing and/or promotion activities during the project performance period.**		
	Initial (Original) Sales Amount (in dollars)	$	☐
	Estimated Final (Resulted) Sales Amount (in dollars)	$	☐
	Percent Change ((n final – n initial)/(n initial) * 100 = % change)	%	☐

Indicator	Description	Estimated Number	N/A
2.b.	**Customer counts increased during the project performance period.**		
	Initial (Original) Customer Count		☐
	Estimated Final (Resulted) Customer Count		☐
	Percent Change ((n final – n initial)/(n initial) * 100 = % change)	%	☐

Outcome 3: To Develop New Market Opportunities for Farm and Ranch Operations Serving Local Markets. *Please provide estimated target numbers.*

Indicator	Description	Estimated Number	N/A
Number of new and/or existing delivery systems/access points reached that expanded and/or improved locally or regionally produced product or service offerings			
3.a.	Number of Farmers Markets		☐
3.b.	Number of Roadside Stands		☐
3.c.	Number of Community Supported Agriculture Programs		☐
3.d.	Number of Agritourism activities		☐
3.e.	Number of other direct producer-to-consumer market opportunities		☐
3.f.	Number of local and regional Food Business Enterprises that process, aggregate, distribute, or store locally and regionally produced agricultural products		☐
Of the local and regional farmers and ranchers, processors, aggregators, and/or distributors reached, the:			
3.g.	Number that reported an increase in revenue expressed in dollars		☐
3.h.	Number that gained knowledge about new market opportunities through technical assistance and education programs		☐
Number of careers, jobs, farmers that went into production			
3.i	Number of New careers created (Difference between "jobs" and "careers": jobs are net gain of paid employment; new businesses created or adopted can indicate new careers)		☐
3.j.	Number of Jobs maintained/created		☐
3.k.	Number of New beginning farmers who went into local/regional food production		☐
3.l.	Number of Socially disadvantaged[1] famers who went into local/regional food production		☐

[1] **Socially Disadvantaged Farmer** is a farmer who is a member of a Socially Disadvantaged Group. A Socially Disadvantaged Group is a group whose members have been subject to discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, and where applicable, sex, marital status, familial status, parental status, religion, sexual orientation, genetic information, political beliefs, reprisal, or because all or a part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program.

Outcome 4: To Improve the Food Safety of Locally and Regionally Produced Agricultural Products.

Indicator	Description	Estimated Number	N/A
4.a.	Number of individuals who learned about prevention, detection, control, and intervention food safety practices		☐
4.b.	Number of those individuals who reported increasing their food safety skills and knowledge		☐
4.c.	Number of growers or producers who obtained on-farm food safety certifications (such as Good Agricultural Practices or Good Handling Practices)		☐

Outcome 5: To Establish or Expand a Local and Regional Food Business Enterprise.

Applicable to projects conducting a needs assessment (i.e. planning projects).

Indicator	Description	Estimated Number	N/A
5.a.	For projects developing a plan to establish or expand a local and regional food business enterprise and conducting a needs assessment: Number of unmet consumer needs, barriers to local foods, unserved populations, etc. identified through the use of a comprehensive need's assessment.		☐
5.b.	Number of plans (business, economic, feasibility) developed based on a comprehensive needs assessment.		☐
5.c.	Amount of non-Federal financial, professional, and technical assistance measured in dollars secured as a result of the developed plan(s).	$	☐

Outcome 6: (REQUIRED)

All applicants must identify at least one additional outcome and indicator based on relevant project activities not covered above.

Project Specific Outcome Indicator(s)

Indicator	Description	Estimated Number

Outcome Indicator Measurement

For each completed outcome indicator, describe how you derived the numbers, how you intend to measure and achieve each relevant outcome and indicator, and any potential challenges to achieving the estimated targets and action steps for addressing them.

Outcome and Indicator # *I.e., 3.i., 6.a., 6.b.*	**How did you derive the estimated numbers?** *I.e., documented background or baseline information, recent research and data, etc.*	**How and when do you intend to evaluate?** *I.e., surveys, 3rd party assessment*	**Anticipated key factors predicted to contribute to and restrict outcome** *Including action steps for addressing identified restricting factors*

One past reviewer pointed out that if a grant team has no idea how to calculate these that they should spend some time learning and coming up with reasonable numbers and then submit the year after. So really, these numbers are that important to get right.

The first thing that confounds some grantwriters is how every indicator could be met equally by the varied projects: of course, they cannot and are not expected to. Since some projects are focused primarily on increasing sales at a market and not on increasing the number of outlets, it stands to reason that some of these indicators are more useful than others. However, it is very helpful to at least address each of the indicators (don't just leave them blank) and explain why your project is not concerning itself with that indicator. It is my opinion that especially when projects are not using all of the listed indicators, that the unique indicator asked for at the end is even more important. Really that indicator should be as important to your team; after all, this is the indicator that allows you to add some local context and creativity to your goals.

In all cases, the numbers you choose should be *slightly* lofty. It is better to set good expectations at the outset and urge the team to do their best work in order to reach or even surpass this project's goals. However, don't just throw some outrageous numbers in there or you will be telling the reviewers and your team that you have no intention of achieving them. So even though I used the word lofty, do be realistic. I'm going to illustrate

those points by talking about two of these outcomes and their indicators below:

Realistic calculations

Outcome 1: Increase consumption and access.

1.a.	**Total number of project beneficiaries/stakeholders reached**
1.b.	Of the total number that were reached, the number that reported buying, selling, aggregating, storing, producing, and/or distributing locally or regionally produced agriculture products
1.c.	Of the total number that were reached, the number that gained knowledge on how to access, produce, prepare, and/or preserve locally and regionally produced agricultural products

The indicators that are clustered with outcome #1 are related, meaning that once you have established (a) the number of buyers and or producers that *gained knowledge*, you can then estimate the number (b) of those that then report an *intention* and then finally, the number (c) that reported actually *buying, selling, aggregating* etc. In the case of this outcome, one might write this for a number of people to be reached in your marketing (a), then how many will visit the market (b), and then calculate how many of those visitors will become shoppers (c). So the initial goal of who and how many to attract should take in the reality that not all those you reach *will* visit, and not all that visit the market *will* become shoppers.

Coming up with percentages of increase can be difficult to be realistic about, so I often suggest that people start on the wrong end: if the project is for increasing shoppers to a single market, how many ***more*** shoppers could that market actually handle per week by the end of this project? 100? 200? 1000? Think about the vendors and your space and visualize adding that number of shoppers every week. Would it overwhelm the market? Do you have enough parking or access to transportation to make it

happen? How many added shoppers per hour would that mean to your anchor vendors? How about to new or one-product vendors?

And then remember that the average shopper in most markets spends between 10-30 dollars. So by adding another 500 weekly shoppers by the end of this project, the market might add another $5,000 -$15,000 week in sales, shared among your vendors. I'm not suggesting that these exact numbers are the right ones for you- they are just an easy example to show how to calculate. If you have done surveys of shoppers to find out what they spend at your markets, use those numbers.

Remember that any added sales to vendors will have an effect on those vendor businesses such as increasing the number of jobs or careers among vendors. And if your project is intent on adding more shoppers, then adding (and measuring) workshop attendance for those vendors to be ready for that new level of activity is also key.

It also may be helpful to do all of these indicators in two columns to consider both the direct and indirect ways that your project will reach people for your final numbers. For example, if you are doing training or workshops you can count your attendance, but how about other farmers in the area who just read about your training or workshop and accessed the information in that manner? What about the project's partners and their reach? And never forget the existing vendors, including them into any project outcome, even if it is a straight up new shopper project; the vendors also can learn about the marketing and use it in their own sales reach that extends beyond your markets to their other outlets if it is shared properly.

Once you set the number who will gain knowledge (and I think that most projects assume that just about everyone who gets your materials or attends your workshop will gain knowledge but be careful about that as a regional marketing plan isn't necessarily education), then think about who will change their behavior because of it. I suspect that if I had a group of market managers and a group of vendors in one room and asked them to gauge how many out of one thousand people reached through materials or training will actually intend to use it, and then how many will actually use

that knowledge to buy, sell aggregate etc. local foods, I'd bet we see a wide spectrum of answers among those groups. That is because estimates can vary based on the perspective and experience of those setting the number.

My feeling would be that the vendors would assume that more people will intend to come but would think that less will actually buy, as they know firsthand how getting people to actually purchase something is hard. I'd say that market managers would be more likely to think more people will be reached but that fewer would report an intention to come to a market, but that once they are there, that a higher percentage will purchase. My assumption may be entirely wrong and maybe someday I can test it and readjust it. The most important thing is to test your project assumptions by asking everyone for numbers and adjusting them accordingly to their bias and experience and according to your plan.

If possible, I'd check with local Chambers of Commerce or other business groups to see if they have numbers about shopping or media reach, or if they can help you calculate this in terms of your market or project.

Outcome 2: To increase sales

In most cases, FMLFPP projects are still primarily attempting to increase sales for farm businesses. Measuring an increase of sales for a project that is going to do marketing or outreach for a single sales outlet is pretty standard. The issue is with all of these indicators is that you need a baseline number (starting point) and that is the thing many market organizations and others do not have yet as most don't yet gather sales regularly. So how do you find the baseline?

The majority of markets ask for standard stall fees which are not based on vendors' sales percentages and because of that, many markets have never asked for sales data from their vendors. For those who do already collect it to calculate fees, they are ahead of the curve and probably have a lot to teach the rest of us about how to do it well. So first, see if other local food outlets do collect sales and see if they will share their tips for doing it;

believe it or not, it will actually help *them* if you followed the same protocol so it is possible they will tell to exactly how to do it.

For those organizations not collecting data for fee calculation, they ask vendors directly, either every market day, every month or every season and then they often share that data back with vendors with some added analysis. Some markets sent weekly or monthly or seasonal emails to their vendors with the data (along with the previous year's data for that same time period) including overall sales, attendance, and weather.

As you can imagine, the longer you wait to ask this, the more difficult it becomes for the vendor to separate the numbers from your market from the other outlets he/she sells at. It also is difficult for multi-tasking vendors to stop at the end of the day to count their money and get that number to you. It will be hard at first and may be hard to get 100% to collect it but those markets that do it successfully say to keep at it; it gets easier! So what works best? My answer is one that some people hate hearing: whatever works best for your community and your management level is what works best- *as long as it gives you accurate data in increments acceptable to those using it*. And build the culture of data collection through using numbers as often as possible.

So how to collect?

Asking for it in anonymous sales slips is the way FMC outlines in our Metrics Guide site to begin to be collected, but there are other good methods to test.

You can also ask shoppers to estimate their purchases and then calculate overall sales from those numbers. Many feel this method of getting sales is better, but it does require more surveying of shoppers more often which means added staff and volunteers.

In any case, once you find a way to find the baseline for sales, you need to calculate the increase. So for market shoppers, knowing the average purchase per visit for your market is extremely helpful. As I mentioned

previously, one average that I have seen used is 10-30 dollars spent per shopper; that comes from data I have helped some markets collect but a small market or a market where some serious shopping is happening may be quite different. Try to find a realistic number and if you have a state farmers market association, ask them. They may have an idea.

One key point to raise for increasing sales is knowing how your project will relate to existing shoppers versus new shoppers. Existing shoppers is a known quantity after all-you should know how many weekly versus monthly shoppers you attract, and some general idea of what they spend. That data can be found out through surveys or through looking at published research of your area to see if someone has calculated it already. If you have a centralized token system, then you have an idea of what those shoppers expect to spend when they come. (You could ask those that use that system to do a quick survey telling you how often they come.) If it is existing shoppers you hope to increase your sales, then you are planning on either changing their behavior by having them stay longer or come more often or by adding products for them to purchase. So in that case, it would mean your project is going to spend most of its efforts on an internal marketing project, using the market, or social media or other channels that your existing shoppers are using to educate.

If it is new shoppers you hope to gain to increase those sales, then the project will focus more on external marketing and preparing the market to welcome those new shoppers.

Showing how you calculated your numbers and how you intend to keep track is key to this section (see below). I have seen entirely too many market proposals assume an increase of 100% or more (!) of new shoppers for a decades-old market, with little written in the grant to show why you assume this level of increase. In comparison, Whole Foods Market showed 8% growth in what is called “comp sales” which is same store sales year-to-year in one of its banner eras during the late 1990s-2000s[2]. That 8% is

[2] Dobrow, J. (2014). *Natural Prophets: From Health Foods to Whole Foods—How the Pioneers of the Industry Changed the Way We Eat and Reshaped American Business*. Rodale.

considered an impressive feat by many analysts. So know your field, and do some research on what your project might reasonably expect to do in terms of increased sales.

Outcome Indicator Measurement

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I hope this helps to get you ready for writing out these indicators. Please check out the rest of our farmersmarketmetrics.guide site for some templates and also farmersmarketcoalition.org's Resource Library for other ideas on evaluation. And good luck!


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