

Cooperative Marketing Program Grants Summary 2011

The Cooperative Marketing Program (CMP) began in 2000. The Cooperative Marketing Program funds come directly from our state marketing budget, in an effort to support our Alaska Grown producers, to encourage the public to purchase Alaska Grown products, and to promote the agricultural industry. The CMP is intended to promote industry, not solely benefit an individual. The CMP is a great way to promote the Ag industry, and it is not limited to any specific area, but open to anyone involved in the agricultural community, granting they are an approved Alaska Grown user. The CMP is a match grant. For every dollar received, a dollar must be spent. In-kind match funds are acceptable. This allows marketing funds to be maximized.

Overview

\$19,000 awarded by 2011 CMP grants.

Contracts Awarded:

Title	Company	Amount Granted	Project Completed
AK Agriculture - Cover to Cover	Alaska Agriculture in the Classroom	\$2,000	Yes
AK Farmers Market Cookbook	Heidi Rader	\$2,000	Yes
AK Grown Red Meat	Alaska Meat Company	\$1,000	Yes
AK Seniors Farmers Market Nutrition Program	AK Department of Health and Human Services	\$1,000	Yes
Fbks SWCD- Forestry Products - Buy Local	Fairbanks Soil & Water Conservation District	\$2,000	Yes
Fairbanks Tour of Greenhouses	Risse Greenhouse	\$2,000	Yes
Food for Thought	Alaska Farmland Trust	\$2,000	Yes
Garden Snaps Map	Garden Snaps LLC	\$2,000	Yes
Juneau Farmers Market Expansion	Juneau Economic Development Council	\$2,000	Yes
Kenai Peninsula Fair- Matti's Farm	Kenai Peninsula Fair	\$2,000	Yes
Kenai Peninsula Hoop House Project	Kenai Peninsula Farm Bureau	\$1,000	No*

* Did not complete project. Initially awarded \$2,000 for the project, but they did not receive the final \$1,000 payment. Only received \$1,000 total.

Project Overviews

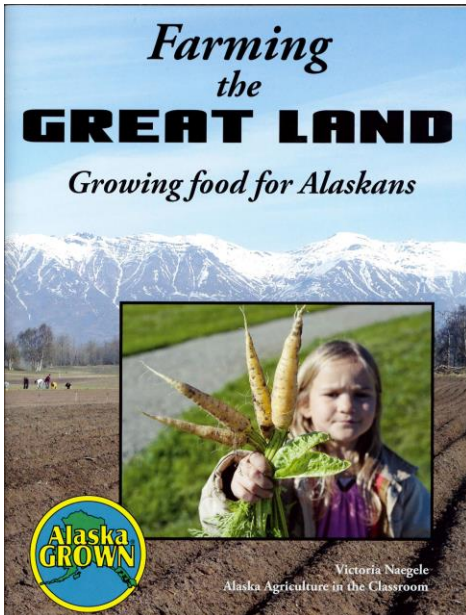
Grant: AK Agriculture - Cover to Cover

Organization: Alaska Agriculture in the Classroom

Agriculture Industry Promoted: Agriculture Education

Alaska Grown Product Sold/Impacted: Agriculture in the Classroom (AITC)

Created and printed the book "Farming the Great Land: Growing food for Alaskans", which is a publication that can be used by 3-5th grade teachers to incorporate Agriculture into the classroom. The book was well received by its panel of reviewers, which included professional authors, teachers, librarians, farmers and the Division of Agriculture. Two lesson plans have been written that go with the book, as well as referencing existing AITC lesson plans that relate to the book's content.



Grant: AK Farmers Market Cookbook

Organization: Heidi Rader

Agriculture Industry Promoted: Alaska Grown Products

Alaska Grown Product Sold/Impacted: N/A

Grant extended a year due to unforeseen circumstances.

The goal of this project was to develop a high quality cookbook with editorial assistance and design from Amazon's Create Space, called the Alaska Farmers Market Cookbook. The second goal was to print 350 copies (revised to 115 copies) to be sold at Alaska Farmers Markets and Home Grown Market in Fairbanks.

Most of this grant went to fund the cover and layout design of the Alaska Farmers Market Cookbook done by a local designer (Adele Wiejaczka – owner of Live Large Design). Most of the matching went towards printing at Create Space.

The Alaska Farmers Market Cookbook was a much bigger project than I anticipated. Testing and developing recipes was incredibly time consuming but also a very rewarding process. Self-publishing any type of cookbook requires that one take on a wide variety of tasks. The grant from the Division of Agriculture turned out to be extremely helpful in making this project a reality – both due to the deadline and also the investment in Layout and Design which makes the book visually appealing.

The first books arrived August 7, 2012. And in a month and a half I have sold 112 books. I sold about 60 books at the Downtown Farmers Market in Fairbanks. They arrived just in time for the Alaska Grown Demo Day on August 8, 2012.

This was my most successful day at the Market and I sold 30 cookbooks then. Basically Basil has also been selling cookbooks at the Tanana Valley Farmers Market and a local café has sold several cookbooks.



Grant: AK Grown Red Meat

Organization: Alaska Meat Company

Agriculture Industry Promoted: Red Meat Industry

Alaska Grown Product Sold/Impacted: Alaska Grown Red Meat

Together with many other producers and local entities, we advertised the availability of Alaska Grown red meat in Alaska, specifically in Kodiak. We held a booth at the Kodiak Comfish Alaska tradeshow event and also at the Kodiak Crab Festival (largest community event in town). We also did radio and newspaper advertising. Comfish and Crabfest were both used as tasting events and allowed producers to promote their products as well as disseminate educational information from related local agencies such as the Farm Bureau and the local Conservation District.

The customer count at Comfish totaled approximately 2,000 people. The customers at Crabfest were about 5,000. Both events proved to provide excellent exposure. The income from meat sales exceeded the costs of the booths which allows this project to be sustainable for future years. For an evaluation we set out a beef sign-up sheet and also took notes on conversations during the events. This proved to be more practical than acquiring comments from people on an official evaluation form. Nobody wrote on the evaluation form. A summary of the feedback we received were things such as:

“Are these Alaska Grown bumper stickers free?” There were many cars wearing the stickers after each event.

“I like to know where my meat comes from. I am really glad you guys are doing this...”

It appeared that our newspaper ad was more effective than the radio ad.

Grant: AK Seniors Farmers Market Nutrition Program

Organization: AK Department of Health and Human Services

Agriculture Industry Promoted: Farmers Markets

Alaska Grown Product Sold/Impacted: Alaska Grown products at Farmers Markets

CMP grant funds were used to purchase coupons for the Senior Farmer’s Market Nutrition (SFMN) program.

The SFMN program contributes to the health of low income seniors by increasing the senior’s availability of fresh produce in the summer season.

The program provides \$25 worth of coupons to be used at local farmers markets to purchase locally grown fruits, vegetables, and herbs. This program benefits both the low income seniors and the local farmers.

For the market season of 2011, 3,002 coupons were distributed to seniors with potential sales for Alaskan farmers of \$75,050. The participating seniors are from diverse areas of the state from Fairbanks to Homer including Bethel, Dillingham, and many other cities with participating farmers and farmers markets.

Our challenges for this program is there are limited administrative funds available for this program. For this year, the price of coupons increased by 112%. We have saved money by printing our nutrition education in house. Next year, our in house printer will charge us for the copies we have made. We also had new distributing agencies this year that required technical assistance and had a learning curve for distribution outreach. We anticipate reaping the rewards of our training next year with increased distribution of coupons to seniors.

Grant: Forestry Products - Buy Local

Organization: Fairbanks Soil & Water Conservation District

Agriculture Industry Promoted: Forestry Products

Alaska Grown Product Sold/Impacted: Alaska Grown Forestry Products

The goals of this project were to:

1. Produce a brochure that lists forest product vendors in the Fairbanks area,
2. Advertise the availability of local trees, shrubs, and other forest products, and
3. Distribute forestry information at local events and educational promotions.

The brochure turned into a booklet to accommodate the large volume of responses received during the search for vendors for the brochure. The final booklet includes 46 businesses and organizations associated with local forest products. We are anticipating that more businesses will want to be included over time, and we plan to update the booklet with their information, either in a printed or digital format.

Throughout the spring, summer, and fall, forestry information was distributed at the Tanana Valley State Fair, FSWCD Tree Sale, AACD Annual meeting, and other events in the area. For Alaska Agriculture Day, the Chamber of Commerce featured Risse Greenhouse at one of their luncheons, where Glenn Risse talked about starting up a tree nursery to supply Kinross Mine with reforestation trees. Other forestry information was provided at the luncheon. Forestry information was also updated on the FSWCD website and an electronic version of the booklet was included, also an article on tree care was included in the FSWCD summer newsletter.

Forestry lessons were taught at after-school programs and special events. We taught several forestry lessons at Outdoor Days, including topics such as tree identification, tree health, wood uses, forest succession, and fire safety/protection. The evaluation at Outdoor Days included pre-test and post-test questions.

The 2011 Speech and Poster Contest featured the theme "Forests for People" in recognition of the International Year of Forests. Advertising was done on the FSWCD website, in the newsletter, and on facebook. Schools and teachers were contacted and given information packets with all the details. FSWCD received 2 entries in the speech contest and 92 entries in the poster contest. Winners will compete in the statewide competition.

Grant: Fairbanks Tour of Greenhouses

Organization: Risse Greenhouse

Agriculture Industry Promoted: Alaska Greenhouse Products

Alaska Grown Product Sold/Impacted: Alaska Greenhouses

The Third Annual Tour of Greenhouses in the Fairbanks North Star Borough was hosted by six greenhouses on the weekend of April 29 through May 1, 2011. The six greenhouses that participated this year were: Hawks Greenhouse, Risse Greenhouse, The Plant Kingdom, The Flower Pot, and two new businesses: B & J Plants and Chena Lakes Farm. This tour offers borough residents an early look, before the growing season, to see what the local greenhouses have to offer. Ads leading up to the event and maps on the tour weekend were published in the Fairbanks Daily News Miner newspaper and on the News Miner website. Ads and the tour map were also published in the Polar News and Alaska

Post, the two newspapers published for Eielson AFB and Ft. Wainwright. A portion of those ads and map were paid for with Cooperative Marketing Program funds. Copies of those ads and map are enclosed.

In addition to the newspaper advertising covered with CMP funds, some of the participating greenhouses advertised the tour in their regular advertising on radio and in the local newspaper.

During the three-day tour, a passport system was used to track the number of people that completed the tour. Each participant was given a paper with a survey on it. They carried it from greenhouse to greenhouse, getting a stamp at each one. At their last stop, they completed the questions on the survey and turned in their "passport". This made them eligible for one of six prizes donated by each participating greenhouse.

Each of the six greenhouses was invited to participate at the level they wished. Some had refreshments. One incorporated their annual open house into the tour weekend.

Grant: Food for Thought

Organization: Alaska Farmland Trust

Agriculture Industry Promoted: Alaska Grown Products

Alaska Grown Product Sold/Impacted: Alaska Grown Vegetables

In order for consumers to invest in local agricultural products they will have to overcome several barriers: 1) preference for the product, 2) access to the product, and 3) cost of the product. Our project aims to address the first two of these through an education campaign at the 2011 Alaska State Fair. The Alaska Farmland Trust will host a booth space during the twelve days of the fair that will feature a single-blind taste testing booth for 16 products comparing Alaska Grown food and out-of-state food. Participants will be asked to give preference to which sample they prefer. Participants will then be given a map of the fairgrounds that identifies food vendors serving Alaska Grown products and an informational booklet identifying where they can purchase locally grown food in their community.

Results:

The Alaska Grown Taste Testing was held during the 12 days of the Alaska State Fair from August 25 – September 5. We taste tested 8 different Alaska Grown products. We had intended to have 16 products, but food preparation and a late season limited the products we could find. All told, 1,862 individuals participated in the event, which was about 44% less than the expected participants. There were 1,023 survey respondents, roughly 55% of the taste test participants. Alaska Grown Products were preferred 2 to 1, about 65% of the event participants preferred Alaska Grown Products.

Participants in the Taste Test answered a 5 question market research survey about local food. Some information gleaned from the survey:

- 82% were able to tell the difference between Alaska Grown and imported produce,
- 87% currently purchase local produce and 87% know where to buy it,
- 61% regularly attend farmers' markets,
- Nearly half of the 750 respondents to "What would encourage you to buy more local produce?" were price, followed by availability, accessibility, convenience, flavor, selection, requests for longer market hours, and more produce and information for customers in grocery stores, and
- Alaska Grown produce was described as sweeter, tastier, crispier, crunchier, juicier, less artificial, and better than outside produce.

A map of Alaska Grown vendors at the State Fair and booklet on where to buy Alaska Grown were not created due to lack of interest/participation by the industry. For the future, I would recommend more collaboration with the Division of Agriculture to help troubleshoot and gather information on these vendors as the Division of Agriculture has a more comprehensive list of buyers.

Grant: Garden Snaps Map

Organization: Garden Snaps LLC

Agriculture Industry Promoted: Greenhouses, Nurseries, Garden Centers, and Farmers Markets

Alaska Grown Product Sold/Impacted: Products at the Greenhouses, Farmers Markets, etc.

Our project was to produce 15,000 double sided Garden Snaps Maps detailing the location and/or information of locally owned Greenhouses, Nurseries, Garden Centers, Farmers Markets, Hardscape and Landscape suppliers, CSA's, Resources, Garden Gifts, and Public Gardens in South Central Alaska, on the rail belt up to Fairbanks, Delta Junction, and Manley Hot Springs. To increase visibility we would place advertisements in 4 newspapers – The Anchorage Daily News, Frontiersman, Fairbanks Daily News Miner, and the Peninsula Clarion. Revenue would be generated by charging for participation on the map, website, and from grant funds. The Alaska Grown logo would be displayed prominently on the map and our website.

The overall goal was to make people aware of Alaskan owned sources of gardening supplies and food products plus educational opportunities thereby influencing their buying habits to increase revenue to local producers, and in particular to Alaska Grown members. By advertising we would reach more of the casual gardeners, driving traffic to our website where they could view and print the maps, then visit businesses on the map to buy products.

A supply of maps would be given to each company on the map to hand out. Maps would also be distributed through the Cooperative Extension offices, Garden Clubs, and by our participation in garden fairs and conferences.

Grant: Juneau Farmers Market Expansion

Organization: Juneau Economic Development Council

Agriculture Industry Promoted: Farmers Markets

Alaska Grown Product Sold/Impacted: Products at Juneau's Farmers Market

The weekly market ran eleven weeks this year, from June 5 – August 21 on the lawn of the Juneau Arts and Culture Center (JACC). In a change from last year, the market was held on Sunday afternoons instead of Saturday mornings. This change allowed the market to move indoors on rainy days, since the facility is empty on Sundays and therefore available for use, in-kind, to the market. The move to Sunday prompted a name change, from Juneau Farmers Market to Juneau Sunday Market, to help reinforce the change of day to the community.

In addition to contacting our vendors from last year, we recruited new vendors through print ads, posters, information tables at community events in early spring, and word of mouth. The number of vendors that registered each week for a table ranged from a low of six to a high of 16, with most weekends having approximately 11. This was a substantial increase over our weekly average of six last year. The expansion was partly due to the merging of the Juneau Artists Market into the Sunday Market. This added some diversification of products to the market offerings. Overall, we had a good distribution of products that included produce, baked goods, jams and jellies, plants, rainforest botanicals and locally produced jewelry. Our average attendance increased from last year and our average sales increased from last year.

The one day Juneau Local Food Festival was scheduled this year as the culminating event of the summer Farmers Market. An enthusiastic crowd of about 1,000 shoppers enjoyed this annual event at the Juneau Arts and Culture Center on Saturday, August 27. 28 vendors offered a variety of locally grown and made goods for sale.

Grant: Kenai Peninsula Fair- Matti's Farm

Organization: Kenai Peninsula Fair

Agriculture Industry Promoted: Alaska Grown Education

Alaska Grown Product Sold/Impacted: Alaska Grown Products

Our Goal was to make the Matti's Farm experience, at the Kenai Peninsula Fair a vehicle for agricultural education to reach children across the peninsula.

Goals:

1. To update the Passports created last year.
 - a. We updated our passports and added new facts and activities for students to complete. We had 2,000 color passports printed. They were given out at the fair.
2. Build a greenhouse at the fairgrounds for the community to use.
 - a. We built a great green house that the community will benefit from. It was not utilized this year, but a plan is in place to use it in the spring of 2012. We are also in the process of constructing a small hoop house for community use as well. The children at Ninilchik School are very excited about the prospect of growing their own vegetables.

Results:

Fair attendance was down by 50%. We had the worst rain storm in fair history and even though we gave out approximately 350 passports, only 15 surveys were turned back in. To try and get more feedback I went to the Ninilchik School and asked my son's 6th grade class and the 4th/5th grade combination class if any of them had seen Matti's Farm at the fair. Total classroom attendance was approximately 40 students, by a show of hands; over half had participated in Matti's Farm. I asked if they had learned anything new and got some great responses.

1. One child stated that she learned that you can milk goats and drink it.
2. Another learned that you can eat goats.
3. They also expressed an interest in growing their own gardens this spring. I am partnering with their teachers to make this happen.

This project did help educate kids and their parents. Our school has begun serving fresh vegetables for snacks and the cook told me that several of the kids have asked her if the vegetables are "Alaska Grown".

Grant: Kenai Peninsula Hoop House Project

Organization: Kenai Peninsula Farm Bureau

Agriculture Industry Promoted: N/A

Alaska Grown Product Sold/Impacted: N/A

PROJECT INCOMPLETE

This is a summary of the project proposal that was granted funds.

There has been a boom in hoop houses being created due to funding provided by the Natural Resource Conservation Service, but no technical advisor or guidance is in place for the growers once the hoop houses have been created.

Proposal:

1. Hold a series of three workshops to address: hoop house selection and installation; production and promotion; wrap up/lessons learned. These facilitated discussions would include growers who have years of experience growing in an unheated controlled environment and people who have already been through a year or more using their hoop houses, along with people who have yet to select a vendor and a model of hoop house to buy and what to grow, to people who are wondering if they should apply for the final round of funding.
 - a. The first workshop would address getting started right. The strengths and faults of the various hoop houses that are available, the installation BMP's and the cultivation practices.
 - b. The second workshop would deal with successful growing methods. Choosing which crops to grow, the timing, soil analysis, water management, nutrient management (organic or conventional) and pest management. Aside from farmers markets, restaurants and CSA's, can we get products into local institutions? The South Peninsula Hospital has shown interest in local produce. Our grocery stores stock local food when they can get it. Someone recently looked at buying the old Smokey Bay Natural Foods store, but there weren't enough locally produced goods available to make the business viable. That may change here very quickly. We also have a DEC certified processing facility available at Coal Point Trading, so growers could extend the availability of their produce beyond the growing season. Where else can we find markets? Can we expand processing capacity? And where can people who are growing for home-use find assistance and education in food preservation techniques.

- c. The final workshop would address lessons learned over the growing season and putting a hoop house to bed for the winter. What sort of support services did people wish they'd had and what spin-off industries showed up over the summer, such as a commercial-scale source of compost and topsoil, sources of seeds and seedlings, and sources of farm labor. How to avoid wind and snow damage over the winter and whether green manure crops will overwinter under Angribond or low tunnels inside a high tunnel.