



Agricultural Marketing Service

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

AWARD YEARS 2021 AND PRIOR

This annual Performance Progress Report (PPR) must illustrate the progress made toward the completion of your project. If this project is completed at the time of the annual PPR submission, the project report should be marked as final. Please note character limits (abbreviated "char.") throughout.

PROJECT INFORMATION

Project Title (250 char.)	Increasing the awareness and use of local food retailers who aggregate specialty crops for public purchase.
Organization Name (250 char.)	South Dakota Specialty Producers Association
Project Start Date	9/30/2021
Project End Date	9/29/2024

ORGANIZATION POINT OF CONTACT

Full Name	Peggy Martin
Phone Number	(605) 685-5428
Email Address	peggy@cedarcreekgardens.com

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

PROJECT PROGRESS

Please provide the total percentage of work completed on the project.	100%
Is this a final report? Please select the box to the right if the answer is "yes".	☐

PROJECT BACKGROUND (REQUIRED FOR FINAL REPORTS)

Provide enough information for the reader to understand the importance or context of the project and any key findings. This section may draw from the background and justification contained in the accepted project plan. As the project has been completed, write this section in past tense. If this is an annual report, please skip this section. (1200 char.)

South Dakota Specialty Producers Association (SDSPA) increased the sales of specialty crops by promoting local food retailers that sell specialty crops from multiple producers. The first step was completing an inventory of specialty crop retailers. These retailers were invited to apply to be a part of the focus group. They assisted in developing a marketing toolkit that all can utilize for the promotion of specialty crop sales, gained access to signage, hosted specialty crop focused events, and increased marketing via social media and radio ads. Through this promotion and marketing,

SDSPA expanded the number of consumers who purchase specialty crops locally. As a result of our project, there was an increase in specialty crop sales and more customers became accustomed to purchasing their produce at alternative retail sites. We projected a cumulative increase of approximately \$7,500 in gross sales in our sample month of August. While we did not reach that goal, we did see an increase in specialty crop sales by at least \$3298.48 in the sample month of August.

OBJECTIVE(S) (REQUIRED)

Please provide the approved project's objectives from the accepted project plan. Use the boxes to indicate if the objective is in progress, has been completed, or is not (and will not be) completed. At the final report, if "no" is selected for any of the listed objectives, you must expand upon this in the Challenges and Developments Section. Additional objectives may be added as needed.

+	#	Objective (2,000 char.)	Objective Completed?
-	1	Inventory and define alternative retail food outlets locations in the state currently working with specialty crop producers, as evidenced by having at least three producers represented through their business.	Yes
-	2	Promote awareness of local food aggregated retailers to the general public through increased marketing, website development, customer promotional events, and establishing communications, resulting in an increase of sales.	Yes
-	3	Determine a baseline of specialty crop sales amongst our focus group, and use this data to determine sales growth through this project	Yes

OUTCOMES

Please only report on the outcomes and indicators that are selected and approved for this project. Use the check boxes to indicate which outcomes and indicators are selected. Select the "N/A" box for any indicators that are not applicable.

1. ENHANCE THE COMPETITIVENESS OF SPECIALTY CROPS THROUGH INCREASED SALES



Please provide data on the sales increased as a result of marketing and/or promotion activities for this reporting period.

Indicators	Value	N/A
Dollar value of sales increased from initial (original) sales amount	\$3,298.48	☐
Dollar value of estimated final (resulted) sales amount (in dollars)	\$48,869.88	☐

2. ENHANCE THE COMPETITIVENESS OF SPECIALTY CROPS THROUGH INCREASED CONSUMPTION ☐

3. ENHANCE THE COMPETITIVENESS OF SPECIALTY CROPS THROUGH INCREASED ACCESS AND AWARENESS ☐

4. ENHANCE THE COMPETITIVENESS OF SPECIALTY CROPS THROUGH GREATER CAPACITY OF SUSTAINABLE PRACTICES OF SPECIALTY CROP PRODUCTION RESULTING IN INCREASED YIELD, REDUCED INPUTS, INCREASED EFFICIENCY, INCREASED ECONOMIC RETURN, AND/OR CONSERVATION OF RESOURCES ☐

5. ENHANCE THE COMPETITIVENESS OF SPECIALTY CROPS THROUGH MORE SUSTAINABLE, DIVERSE, AND RESILIENT SPECIALTY CROP SYSTEMS ☐

6. ENHANCE THE COMPETITIVENESS OF SPECIALTY CROPS THROUGH INCREASING THE NUMBER OF VIABLE TECHNOLOGIES TO IMPROVE FOOD SAFETY ☐

7. ENHANCE THE COMPETITIVENESS OF SPECIALTY CROPS THROUGH INCREASED UNDERSTANDING OF THREATS TO FOOD SAFETY FROM MICROBIAL AND CHEMICAL SOURCES ☐

8. ENHANCE THE COMPETITIVENESS OF SPECIALTY CROPS THROUGH ENHANCING OR IMPROVING THE ECONOMY AS A RESULT OF SPECIALTY CROP DEVELOPMENT ☐

ADDITIONAL APPROVED OUTCOME (IF APPLICABLE) ☐

OUTCOME REMARKS (REQUIRED)

Please explain any quantifiable results, along with an update on their progress and data collection efforts for each of the outcomes and indicators selected in the accepted project plan. It is understood that the results may not yet be final at the time that this report is submitted; however, please provide an update on progress to date. If you do not have any data on the indicator(s) listed above, you must explain why in this section. (2,000 char.)

Year 3 - Outcome 1 Indicator 1: The final data collection from August 2024 reflected cumulative sales of \$48869.88, an average of \$1629 / day based on a 30 day month. This reflects a cumulative increase of \$3298.48 over the sample month of August. The sales per day increased by \$109.95. Based on SDSPA's year one purchase estimates, that indicates 5-9 additional customers purchasing specialty crops per day.

Year 2- Outcome 1 Indicator 1: With the adjustment of changing retailers, August 2022 sales data showed \$45308.77 of cumulative South Dakota grown specialty crop sales. This equates to an average of \$1,510.23/day based on a 30 day month.

Year 1- Outcome 1 Indicator 1: At time of grant application data was collected from three anonymous retail sites to determine average Aug 2021 sales were \$1,250/day. And average customer purchases of specialty crops were \$12-20 per purchase. Aug 2022 sales data was collected, and cumulatively the eight producers data showed \$57,933.43 of cumulative South Dakota grown specialty crop sales. This equates to an average of \$1,931/day based on a 30 day month.

NARRATIVE

ACCOMPLISHMENTS (REQUIRED)

If this is an annual report, list your accomplishments for this reporting period. If this is a final report, your accomplishments should be cumulative and include all accomplishments previously reported on and updated to include activities conducted this past reporting period. Indicate how these accomplishments associated with each of your project's objective(s), outcome(s), and/or indicator(s). This listing should identify your project's partners and their contributions. Additional accomplishments can be added as needed.

+	#	Accomplishment (1,200 char.)	Related to (Objective/ Outcome)
-	1	Retailer Directory Year 3: At the end of the project in 2024, 113 retailers are identified on the map. There was a total increase of 80 retailers identified. Year 2: One retailer stepped down, but we were able to fill the spot quickly. Retailers have continued to be added to our online inventory located on the Retailer Webpage (https://sdspecialtyproducers.org/retailer/). The map listing in 2022 identified 76 retailers, up from 33 when the project began in 2021. On the webpage retailers involved in the project were identified on a scrolling banner connecting them as a location offering the specialty crop of the month" as well as identifying them as a location that carries products from at least 3 specialty crop producers. Year 1: Created a database of retail locations for project recruitment. Developed and promoted an application to recruit retail entities to participate. Eight retailers who sell specialty crops from three or more locations were chosen	Objective 1 Inventory and define alternative retail food outlets locations in the state currently working with specialty crop producers, as evidenced by having at least three producers represented through their business.

-	2	Fresher is Fun Toolkit Year 3: The final toolkit complete with blank event fliers (11), event social media posts (9), general fliers (3), crop focused social media posts and captions (39), 6 types of signage templates in various designs, 15 and 30 second radio ad scripts, and a brand kit and post planning guide can be accessed here. The toolkit webpage has had 83 active users (117 views). The video to assist in navigating and editing kit material has 11 views. Year 2: Henkin Shultz, the eight retailers, and SDSPA contractors to develop a campaign & toolkit consisting of event flyers, promotional flyers, radio scripts, social media posts and store signage. Retailers provided initial feedback, and then SDSPA contractors mediated adjustments based on the feedback to arrive at a design everyone was excited to utilize. The focus group retailers had access to the toolkit throughout the project while materials were being developed. Year 1: After recruiting and interviewing marketing agencies, SDSPA selected HenkinShultz-Reid to work with participating retailers to develop marketing kit.	Objective 2 Promote awareness of local food aggregated retailers to the general public through increased marketing, website development, customer promotional events, and establishing communications, resulting in an increase of sales.
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-	3	Radio and Digital Ads Year 3: We worked with Haugo Broadcasting in Rapid City to develop and run a digital and radio ad campaign for July 2024. Four ad versions were run in 10 South Dakota zipcodes near our focus group retailers directing listeners how to use the SDSPA retailers webpage to find a retailer near them. The digital ads had 33,269 impressions and the radio ads had a reach of over 18,393 listeners. Year 2: We ran a radio campaign which included airtime on six different stations near cities with local specialty crop retailers to raise awareness of the advantages of shopping at these sites, and how they can use the listing on our website to find one near them. Each radio station ran a slightly differently worded ad, each with a similar overall message from what was identified during Henkin Shultz discovery phase. SDSPA contractors ensured the message was in line with grant requirements.	Objective 2 Promote awareness of local food aggregated retailers to the general public through increased marketing, website development, customer promotional events, and establishing communications, resulting in an increase of sales.
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-	4	In season crop promotion posts A specialty crop was promoted each month starting in May 2023 utilizing toolkit graphics created by Henkin Shultz. The crop was featured on the SDSPA website and in a South Dakota Facebook/Instagram post. Year 3: Oct- Pumpkins: 4,267 reach, 82 clicks, 1 like Nov- Squash: 4,003 reach, 60 clicks, 22 likes Dec- Salsa/Sauces: 3,362 reach, 60 clicks, 16 likes Jan- Tea: 3,340 reach, 265 clicks, 119 likes Feb- Honey: 6,595 reach, 172 clicks, 71 likes Mar/Apr- Microgreens: 4,062 reach, 87 clicks, 22 likes May- Hummus: 2,715 reach, 136 clicks, 79 likes June- Cabbage: 5,105 reach, 100 clicks, 15 likes July- Potato: 5,718 reach, 179 clicks, 22 likes Aug- Carrots: 4,106 reach, 78 clicks, 15 likes Sept- Aronia: 4,721 reach, 227 clicks, 30 likes Year 2: May- Mushroom: 4,022 reach, 88 clicks, 26 likes June- Salad Blend/Lettuce: 3,686 reach, 111 clicks, 31 likes July- Cucumber: 4,197 reach, 166 clicks, 23 likes Aug- Sweet Corn: 4,561 reach, 146 clicks, 14 likes Sept- Tomatoes: 5,411 reach, 154 clicks, 18 likes Campaign feedback including: 'Now THIS is good advertising for local food! Thanks!' FB Comment 6/13/23- Joan Wollschlager, S.D. Producer.	Objective 2 Promote awareness of local food aggregated retailers to the general public through increased marketing, website development, customer promotional events, and establishing communications, resulting in an increase of sales.
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-	5	Feature Stories: Eight specialty crop feature stories were prepared & distributed to the press (linked example below) & posted on our website/social media/newsletter during their correlating promotional month. Year 3 : Squash (Nov) South Dakota squash available for the holidays, Brookings Register Honey (Feb) Fall in Love with South Dakota Honey, Morning Ag Clips Hummus (May) Local Producer Offers Flavorful South Dakota Hummus, KBHB Radio Microgreens (June) Retailer Offers Flavorful South Dakota Microgreens, Morning Ag Clips Potato (Aug) South Dakota Grown Potatoes In Season Now, Capital Journal Aronia (Sept): 'Superberry' Aronia Now Available From South Dakota Farmers, Vermilion Plaintalk Feedback: "We are getting calls for people wanting to buy our berries. I see the Plaintalk actually printed it in the local paper." Angela Jackson, Sept 2024 Year 2: Sweet Corn (Aug): Sweet corn season, Tri-State Neighbor Tomatoes (Sept): Last chance for South Dakota-grown tomatoes, Hortidaily	Objective 2 Promote awareness of local food aggregated retailers to the general public through increased marketing, website development, customer promotional events, and establishing communications, resulting in an increase of sales.
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-	6	Promotional Events: During this project each of the 8 retailers held an event to promote and celebrate local specialty crops. SDSPA worked with retailer and an event planner at each site to assure each event was well advertised and met the goal of promoting specialty crops to an expanded audience. SDSPA assisted with event promotion through regional press releases, our website, social media (including a \$10 paid ad) and newsletter. Local retailers provided additional advertising. During the 3rd year of the project 5 events were held. During year 2, three events were held.	Objective 2 Promote awareness of local food aggregated retailers to the general public through increased marketing, website development, customer promotional events, and establishing communications, resulting in an increase of sales.
-	7	Year 3 Promotional events: In Sturgis SD the biggest event for 2023 was held celebrating local mushrooms, with 300 attendees! Event Recap In March a participating food hub partnered with a local restaurant in Sioux Falls to promote microgreens during their lunch time rush. We had 75 interactions with attendees and were interviewed by AgWeek. Event Recap A meet your farmer event in Sioux Falls allowed local customers to connect with not only the retailer board and staff, but also 3 local producers. A variety of in season specialty crops were promoted to 300 attendees. Event Recap In Nisland SD, the Jam and Honey Festival was held with 300 attendees. The event hosted a total of 5 specialty crop producers in the area who shared a variety of crops including honey, vegetables, fruit, and cut flowers. Event Recap The final event took place in Rapid City promoting sweet corn to 100 attendees. Event Recap	Objective 2 Promote awareness of local food aggregated retailers to the general public through increased marketing, website development, customer promotional events, and establishing communications, resulting in an increase of sales.

-	8	Promotional Events Year 2: In Rapid City we held an event celebrating honey, with about 150 interactions with attendees, in addition to a separate radio promotion that the store chose to implement. Honey event recap. In Custer, we held another event celebrating honey, with about 100 interactions with attendees. Honey event recap. In Aberdeen, we held an event celebrating a variety of local produce available locally, with about 100 interactions with attendees. Seasonal produce event recap.	Objective 2 Promote awareness of local food aggregated retailers to the general public through increased marketing, website development, customer promotional events, and establishing communications, resulting in an increase of sales.
-	9	Retailer signage: Each retailer site worked with a SDSPA contractor to place an order for signage in both 2023 and 2024 to promote the idea of purchasing local specialty crops, using high quality and professional signage. During the year 3 events, we noticed that retailers had printed and posted signage from the toolkits as well. In the words of one retailer, Wild Spruce Market, "Honey sales have been crazy since using the sandwich boards! The marketing material is definitely beneficial." Wild Spruce Market commented again during the final data collection, "We primarily used outdoor sidewalk signage, and the honey sign sold extra product all year long. Not necessarily just in the months of August." Another retailer, Bear Butte Gardens, commented that as soon as the feather banners went up they immediately noticed an increase in foot traffic.	Objective 2 Promote awareness of local food aggregated retailers to the general public through increased marketing, website development, customer promotional events, and establishing communications, resulting in an increase of sales.

-	10	Website Development During the project period enhancements were made to SDSPA's retailer page which supports farm stores, farm stands, grocery stores and other retailers selling local foods. Social media ads featuring the in-season crops directed consumers to this site so they could identify retailers in or near their community for purchasing specialty crops. From Dec. 2022 to Sept. 2024 this retailer page shifted from 48th to the 2nd most visited site on the SDSPA website. Since Oct. 2023, this page was typically in the top 5 most visited page on the website. 2024 Quarter 3 (July-Sept)- 690 Pageviews 2024 Q 2 (Apr-June)- 213 Pageviews 2024 Q 1 (Jan-Mar)- 320 Pageviews 2023 Q 4 (Oct-Dec)- 293 Pageviews 2023 Q 3- 591 Pageviews 2023 Q 2- 325 Pageviews 2024 Q 1- 69 Pageviews Page components include: - Directory Map pinning the location of retailers in the state and members listing. - Promotional banner that features in-season specialty crops. - Resource links on requirements for selling to retail, requirements for food entrepreneurs selling in South Dakota, Roadside stands and a link to the Fresher is Fun Tool kit. Links to relevant organizations and news	Objective 2 Promote awareness of local food aggregated retailers to the general public through increased marketing, website development, customer promotional events, and establishing communications, resulting in an increase of sales.
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-	11	Year 3: In September 2024 we collected August 2024 specialty crop sales data from the eight participating retailers. The August 2024 sales data reflected cumulative specialty crop sales of \$48869.88 and \$1629 per day based on a 30 day month. This shows a \$3298.48 total increase and a \$109.95/ day increase from the baseline 2022 data. Year 2: Each retailer is aware that we will then collect data again in August 2024 to show the impact of their project. Year 1: In fall of 2022 we collected August 2022 retailer sales data from the participating retailer locations. The August 2022 data reflected cumulative specialty crop sales of \$45571.40. The specialty crop sales per day were averaged to \$1519.05 based on a 30 day month.	Objective 3 Determine a baseline of specialty crop sales amongst our focus group, and use this data to determine sales growth through this project
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CHALLENGES AND DEVELOPMENTS (REQUIRED)

Provide any challenges to the completion of your project or any positive developments outside of the project's original intent that you experienced during this reporting period. Also, provide the corrective actions you took to address these issues. If you did not attain an approved objective, outcome(s), and/or indicator(s), provide an explanation in the Corrective Actions column. For developments, you may put "N/A" under Corrective Actions. Additional challenges/developments may be added as needed.

+	#	Challenge or Development (1,200 char.)	Corrective Action
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-	1	Unresponsive retailers	Participating retailers not responding delayed or impacted some of the deliverables. The largest being the August 2024 data collection. We had 1 completely unresponsive retailer here despite emailing, calling the location and listed phone, texts, and even stopping in person. For the listed 2024 sales averages, these locations baseline numbers were used in order to not show undocumented growth, but also to not bring down the progress of the other retailers.
-	2	One participating retailer decided in July 2023 that they no longer wished to participate due to employee turnover and other shifts in priorities.	We were able to recruit a new retailer to fill their spot, obtaining their August 2022 sales to help with data, helped them with a signage order, and informed them of opportunities and steps for this project.

UPCOMING ACTIVITIES (REQUIRED FOR ANNUAL REPORTS)

Provide a description of the activities that you are planning to complete during the next reporting period. Additional activities can be added as needed. Please note, if this is a final report there should be no upcoming activities associated with the project, and this section should be left blank.

+	#	Activity (600 char.)	Anticipated Completion
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LESSON LEARNED (REQUIRED FOR FINAL REPORTS)

The recipient or subrecipient is required to provide recommendations or advice that others may use to improve their performance in implementing similar projects. If this is an annual report, please skip this section. (1200 char.)

It is important to consider unresponsive retailers. Despite our best efforts to continue communication throughout the project through a variety of communication methods (email, phone, social media, and face to face) we still had unresponsive retailers. We experienced a lag in communication from at least half of our retailers at some point through the project from turn over, to business changes, or other reasons. Specifically in regards to turnover on two occasions we were told by new employees that they were unaware of the project at all during their transition. Having material ready to share or providing it to the retail location to share in the event of a change in staff may be helpful. It allows them to gain background on the project while also understanding what is needed moving forward. This may be avoided by increased screening prior to participation as well.

When developing marketing materials that are intended to be used and accessible to the public for the foreseeable future be sure to consider the delivery method/how they will be accessed early on in the development process.

CONTINUATION AND DISSEMINATION OF RESULTS (REQUIRED FOR FINAL REPORTS)

Describe your plans for continuing the project (sustainability; capacity building) and/or disseminating the project results. If this is an annual report, please skip this section. (1200 char.)

The resources created during this project in terms of marketing materials will continue to be shared to specialty crop producers and retailers via the SDSPA website, social media, and at our informational booths at in person events. SDSPA will also continue to use the toolkit materials in the future for our own promotion efforts.

The signage received by the 8 participating retailers will continue to be used in the future to promote specialty crops.

While SDSPA does not have a plan to continue hosting the events in this project, at least 3 of the retailers plan to continue this work as annual events hosted by the retailer to promote their local specialty crops.

PROJECT BENEFICIARIES (REQUIRED FOR FINAL REPORTS)

Provide the number of project beneficiaries. If this is an annual report, please skip this section. (12 char.)

126,000

FEDERAL PROJECT EXPENDITURE

EXPENDITURE (REQUIRED)

You must respond to at least one cost category. Please note, the subtotal and total rows include formulas to auto-calculate totals. The approved budget should come from the accepted project plan or any approved budget amendments.

Cost Category	Amount Approved in Budget	Actual Federal Expenditures (Federal Funds Only)
Personnel	\$0.00	\$0.00
Fringe Benefits	\$0.00	\$0.00
Travel	\$2,308.79	\$2,295.20
Equipment	\$0.00	\$0.00

Supplies	\$24,167.04	\$24,167.13
Contractual	\$60,749.18	\$60,748.75
Other	\$139.99	\$139.99
Direct Costs Sub-Total	\$87,365.00	\$87,351.07
Indirect Costs	\$6,989.00	\$6,989.00
Project Expenditure Total Federal Costs	\$94,354.00	\$94,340.07

DISCUSSION OF EXPENDITURES (REQUIRED)

For 1st Annual Reports, if total project expenditures is less than 30 percent, and for 2nd Annual Reports, if total project expenditures is less than 60 percent, include a statement explaining how the grant funds will be expended and project activities completed as planned by the end date on the grant agreement. Any state approved budget amendments should be included here; Include the line item that the funds are coming from and going to and when the state approved the budget amendment. (1,200 char.)

Amendment made to funds in July 2024.
 \$847.04 moved to supplies from travel to cover signage costs
 \$310.01 from other to contractual to facilitate project completion
 \$284.17 from travel to contractual to facilitate project completion

 \$1,441.22 moved (1.53% of project total)

PROGRAM INCOME (IF APPLICABLE)

If program income was earned on the project, grant recipients are required to report on the source, amount, and how funds were expended. Program income is gross income --earned by a recipient or subrecipient under a grant --directly generated by the grant-supported activity or earned only because of the grant agreement during the grant period of performance. Program income includes, but is not limited to, income from fees for services performed; the sale of commodities or items fabricated under an award (this includes items sold at cost if the cost of producing the item was funded in whole or partially with grant funds); registration fees for conferences, etc.

+	Source/Nature of Program Income (100 char.)	Amount Approved in Budget	Actual Amount Earned
-		\$0.00	\$0.00

USE OF PROGRAM INCOME (IF APPLICABLE)

Describe how the earned program income was used to further the objectives of this project during the performance period. Any income generated must be reinvested back into the project and not set aside or reserved for future expenses after the grant ends. (1,200 char.)

PPR ATTACHMENTS DESCRIPTION (IF APPLICABLE)

Grantors will rely on the data that is submitted in this form when they report to congress. However, if you think additional documents are necessary to support PPR, please attach then and provide a document name and description of document below.

+	Document Name	Document Description
-		