

FINAL PERFORMANCE REPORT

AWARD YEARS 2016 FORWARD

A Final Performance Report must be received within 90 days after the end of the grant agreement. You are required to report on the administration of the agreement and each project approved within the agreement. The completed Final Performance Report will be posted to the AMS website.

GRANT INFORMATION

AGREEMENT

AMS Agreement Number:	2020SAA03		
Period of Performance:	Start Date:	9/30/2020	End Date: 9/30/2023
Award Amount:			

RECIPIENT

Recipient Organization Name:	Stewart's Aronia Acres LLC
Recipient's Point of Contact	
Name:	Jeff Stewart
Phone:	605-481-0406
Email:	jstewart@hcinet.net

REPORT

Report Type:	Final Performance Report
Date Report is Submitted:	10/5/2022

GRANT ADMINISTRATION

If funds were used for grant administration, indicate the amount of funding expended from the beginning of the grant to the end of the reporting period covered by this report. Also, indicate the amount charged as indirect expenses versus the amount charged as direct expenses.

Amount Requested	Direct and/or Indirect Expended to Date

FINAL PROJECT REPORT TEMPLATE

Final Performance Reports must illustrate the completion of each project within the grant agreement. Each project shall be outlined as separate project profiles. You will report on projects in the same order they were submitted in the approved application and subsequent amendments.

PROJECT INFORMATION

Project Title	Black Currant Product For Healthy Eating and Storage		
Recipient Organization Name:	Stewart's Aronia Acres LLC		
Period of Performance:	Start Date:	9/30/2020	End Date: 8/25/2022

Recipient's Project Contact	
Name:	Jeff Stewart
Phone:	605-481-0406
Email:	jstewart@hcinet.net

PERFORMANCE NARRATIVE

PROJECT BACKGROUND

Provide enough information for the reader to understand the importance or context of the project. This section may draw from the background and justification contained in the approved project proposal.

Black currants are an extremely healthy but much underutilized fruit in the United States. The nutritional values far exceed other commonly cultivated fruits. For example, they have four times the calcium, nine times the iron, and twice the protein and vitamin A as blueberries. They have over five times the vitamin C as oranges. Black currants can be successfully grown in South Dakota but value added products need to be developed to make them more palatable, thus consumed to a greater extent. Research and experimentation to have been conducted during this project would have developed the methodology and processes necessary to economically create three locally produced edible black currants products for food ready consumption, storage and sales. Consumer input and test marketing were to determine which product(s) moved forward to full production.

ACTIVITIES PERFORMED

Address the below sections as they relate to the entire project's period of performance.

OBJECTIVES

Provide the approved project's objectives.

#	Objective	Completed?	
		Yes	No*
1	Research current processes, develop a recipe, and economically create shelf stable bottled black currant syrup/topping while maintaining the high nutritional values inherent in the berries.		X
2	Research current processes, develop a recipe, and economically create a bagged shelf stable, black currant marinade sauce while maintaining the high nutritional values inherent in the berries.		X
3	Research current processes and develop a method for economically creating a bagged shelf stable, dried, slightly sweetened, soft black currant with the option of adding them to granolas, or fruit/grain or protein bars.		X
4	Take at least one of the three products and completely follow through with marketing, production and sales to determine the actual economic viability of this product using only South Dakota grown black currants.		X

**If no is selected for any of the listed objectives, you must expand upon this in the challenges and lessons learned sections.*

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

List your accomplishments for the project's period of performance, including the impact they had on the project's beneficiaries, and indicate how these accomplishments assist in the fulfillment of your project's objective(s), outcome(s), and/or indicator(s).

#	Accomplishment or Impact	Relevance to Objective, Outcome, and/or Indicator
1	Secured rental rate and assistance agreement for building, equipment and co-packer assistance	Use of co-packers facilities and expertise was necessary for project Obj. 1,2,3 • Objective 1 Research current processes, develop a recipe, and economically create shelf stable bottled black currant syrup/topping while maintaining the high nutritional values inherent in the berries. • Objective 2 Research current processes, develop a recipe, and economically create a bagged shelf stable, black currant marinade sauce while maintaining the high nutritional values inherent in the berries. • Objective 3 Research current processes and develop a method for economically creating a bagged shelf stable, dried, slightly sweetened, soft black currant with the option of adding them to granolas, or fruit/grain or protein bars.
2	Developed recipe and secured assistance agreement with food processing consultant The recipe and method of preparation for the dried, slightly sweetened, soft black currant bagged product was developed with some assistance from the food processing consultant. No costs were accrued. A recipe for a Cumberland condiment meat sauce using black currants, lemon, orange, honey etc. Recipes for a meat marinade sauce, a salad dressing and an ice cream topping were also developed for potential testing and trials. No recipes or products above are being made available to the public	Product recipe and Food Processor's assistance was very necessary for project to get started Obj. 1,2,3 • Objective 1 Research current processes, develop a recipe, and economically create shelf stable bottled black currant syrup/topping while maintaining the high nutritional values inherent in the berries. • Objective 2 Research current processes, develop a recipe, and economically create a bagged shelf stable, black currant marinade sauce while maintaining the high nutritional values inherent in the berries. • Objective 3 Research current processes and develop a method for economically creating a bagged shelf stable, dried, slightly sweetened, soft black currant with the option of adding them to granolas, or fruit/grain or protein bars. Some process and recipe development was done with NY consultant via phone and some process development research was done in home kitchen
3	Consultant developed label for 3 products	Label development was necessary for all other activities such as ingredients, shelf life determination, bagging, bottling and selling Obj. 1,2,3,4

#	Accomplishment or Impact	Relevance to Objective, Outcome, and/or Indicator
		• Objective 1 Research current processes, develop a recipe, and economically create shelf stable bottled black currant syrup/topping while maintaining the high nutritional values inherent in the berries. • Objective 2 Research current processes, develop a recipe, and economically create a bagged shelf stable, black currant marinade sauce while maintaining the high nutritional values inherent in the berries. • Objective 3 Research current processes and develop a method for economically creating a bagged shelf stable, dried, slightly sweetened, soft black currant with the option of adding them to granolas, or fruit/grain or protein bars. • Objective 4 Take at least one of the three products and completely follow through with marketing, production and sales to determine the actual economic viability of this product using only South Dakota grown black currants.
4		

CHALLENGES AND DEVELOPMENTS

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 project. Also, provide the corrective actions you took to address these issues. If you did not attain an approved objectives, outcome(s), and/or indicator(s), provide an explanation in the Corrective Actions column.

#	Challenge or Development	Corrective Action or Project Change
1	Securing some product ingredients for the initial run of products	Enlisted help from our NY food processing consultant for some products. Were not able to purchase a small quantity (5-gallons) of de-ionized white grape concentrate. Can only buy in 60 gallon barrel. NY consultant did not fulfill commitment to send us 5 gallons for our research run of product and attempted to charge an unreasonable price. Obj. 1,2,3
2	Securing our food processing consultant from New York to assist on site with the initial run of the products. This was due to travel restriction due to covid.	Food processing consultant never came to the co-packing facility. He was amenable to assisting us via zoom if necessary, but proved to be a difficult project partner. Obj. 1,2,3
3	Closure of co-packing facility and commercial kitchen.	Following closure of initial co-packer facility with commercial kitchen owned by a project advisor, we pivoted to a second commercial kitchen with a large commercial dehydrator. That operation subsequently closed as well and left the project without access to any storage or production facilities in the region available for use, rendering

#	Challenge or Development	Corrective Action or Project Change
		the core logistics of the project uneconomical and infeasible. No replacement commercial kitchen facility with the requisite equipment could be located and engaged as a substitute partner. Obj. 1, 2, 3, 4.
4		

LESSONS LEARNED

Provide recommendations or advice that others may use to improve their performance in implementing similar projects.

This project was a great project and should have been completed as it would have had many benefits to SD producers of black currants and to consumers. It would have added some easily stored highly nutritious alternative products to every day eating. Logistics fell apart such as: our co-packer suddenly going out of the co-packing business and our inability early on to secure a small quantity of an essential product (de-ionized white grape concentrate) to create an initial batch for nutrition labeling and shelf life testing. When we finally secured a small quantity we could use we found out our co-packer was going out of business. No other logistically located commercial kitchens or co-packers were available that we could find and use. Most of the problems we faced were due to unforeseen supply chain issues, shipping costs and the covid pandemic. These issues gave us problems and also caused our co-packer to end his business.

CONTINUATION AND DISSEMINATION OF RESULTS (IF APPLICABLE)

Describe your plans for continuing the project (sustainability; capacity building) and/or disseminating the project results.

BENEFICIARIES

Number of project beneficiaries:.....N/A

OUTCOME(S) AND INDICATOR(S)/SUB-INDICATOR(S)

Provide the results of the project outcome(s) and indicator(s) as approved in your application and project proposal. The results of the outcome(s) and indicator(s) will be used to evaluate the performance of the Program on a national level.

OUTCOME MEASURE(S)

Select the Outcome Measure(s) that were approved for your project.

- ☒ **Outcome 1:** Enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops through increased sales
- ☐ **Outcome 2:** Enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops through increased consumption
- ☐ **Outcome 3:** Enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops through increased access
- ☐ **Outcome 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
- ☐ **Outcome 5:** Enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops through more sustainable, diverse, and resilient specialty crop systems
- ☐ **Outcome 6:** Enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops through increasing the number of viable technologies to improve food safety
- ☐ **Outcome 7:** Enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops through increased understanding of the ecology of threats to food safety from microbial and chemical sources
- ☒ **Outcome 8:** Enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops through enhancing or improving the economy as a result of specialty crop development

OUTCOME INDICATOR(S)

Provide the indicator approved for your project and the related quantifiable result. If you have multiple outcomes and/or indicators, repeat this for each outcome/indicator (add more rows as needed).

#	Outcome and Indicator	Quantifiable Results
1	Outcomes #1 and #8 More detail below	All outcomes were initially delayed due to the problem of securing some product ingredients and in getting our food processor to our co-packer facility for an initial run of product. Our co-packer then went out of business and we were not able find another co-packer or commercial kitchen with the essential equipment needed to make our products.
1-1	○ Outcome 1: Indicator 1: After initial promotion, sample tastings, and marketing of the product(s), sales will increase from 1 case per month (\$63) to 2 cases per month (\$126); by 50 percent, as a result of marketing and/or promotion activities	No products were produced for tasting, testing, marketing or promotion activities.
1-2	○ Outcome1: Indicator 2: Three new and improved technologies, processes and products to enhance the nutritional value and consumer acceptance of black currants as specialty crops (excluding patents) will be available and introduced to consumers.	No products were produced to final phase so no improved technologies or processes were developed.
1-3	○ Outcome 1: Indicator 3: The number of existing delivery systems/access points will expand and/or improve new offerings of specialty crops (black currants).	No products were produced for delivery
8-1	○ Outcome 8: Indicator 1: Three small businesses will be enhanced or started, with new, more profitable marketing alternatives.	No products were produced and no businesses were started or enhanced.

DATA COLLECTION

Explain what data was collected, how it was collected, the evaluation methods used, and how the data was analyzed to derive the quantifiable indicator.

Recipes were developed for some of our products by ourselves and with the consultant. We had developed a rough package logo.

FEDERAL PROJECT EXPENDITURES

EXPENDITURES

Cost Category	Amount Approved in Budget	Actual Federal Expenditures (Federal Funds ONLY)
Personnel	3375	0
Fringe Benefits	0	0
Travel	5236	0
Equipment	800	0
Supplies	2427	0
Contractual	25856	0
Other		
Direct Costs Sub-Total	37694	0
Indirect Costs	1812	0
Total Federal Costs	39506	0

PROGRAM INCOME (IF APPLICABLE)

Source/Nature (i.e., registration fees)	Amount Approved in Budget	Actual Amount Earned
1.		
2.		
3.		
Total Program Income Earned		

Use of Program Income

Describe how the earned program income was used to further the objectives of this project.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Provide additional information available (i.e., publications, websites, photographs) that is not applicable to any of the prior sections.

In summary, we initially had some trouble getting deionized white grape concentrate in the small quantity (5 gallons) we needed for our initial product development, labeling, nutrient and shelf life testing. When we finally got that lined up, we found out our co-packer in Pukwana, SD closed his commercial kitchen/co-packing facility in April. He was on board to be one of our advisors and had a 40 gallon steam kettle and a convection oven for our product development.

We then lined up a person with the commercial kitchen and large commercial dehydrator (Tony Heisterkamp) in Akron, IA. He subsequently informed us that his business in Vermillion, SD was closing and he had to move pallets of product and equipment to his commercial kitchen facility in Akron for storage. He informed us it was no longer going to be possible for us to use his kitchen.

We contacted numerous people in the specialty producer industry and could not find a commercial

kitchen facility with the equipment we need to complete our project/grant. Therefore in consultation with our grant partner Keri O'Neil, I am unfortunately requesting the grant be terminated. We have not expended any of the grant monies and regret this decision. We possibly could have submitted expenditures for initial travel and meeting with the co-packer, and then travel to his facility again to look at purchasing some of this equipment (steam kettle, convection oven and bottler) so we could complete the project but this did not pan out due to prohibited costs. His equipment is run on natural gas and we would still have to find a commercial kitchen to operate in. His facility would have worked out well along with his expertise and experience in the co-packing business.