Integrated Marketing Communications Campaign

Local Foods and Farmers Markets in Northwest Minnesota

Regional Sustainable Development Partnerships

Prepared by
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E90/001 (online and on-campus section)
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**Campaign Goals**

The goals to be achieved by this campaign from May 1, 2012 through October 31, 2013 are as follows:

- Increase awareness of farmers markets in northwest Minnesota
- Increase awareness of local foods in northwest Minnesota
- Increase the number of customers at farmers markets in northwest Minnesota
- Increase sales of local foods in northwest Minnesota
- Increase sales at farmers markets in northwest Minnesota

**Industry Background**

**Recent Growth**

Over the past decade, the demand for locally grown foods has increased dramatically. One national survey by the Food Industry Institute found that 87 percent of consumers prefer locally grown foods because of its freshness. Seventy-five percent prefer local foods because it supports the local economy, and 58 percent because they know where the food originated (Martinez et al., 2010).

According to the USDA, direct-to-consumer marketing of local foods contributed to $1.2 billion in sales in 2007, compared to $551 million in 1997. The USDA further reported that the number of farmers markets in the United States grew by 2,518 between 1998 and 2009. While still small when compared to the non-local food market, the purchase of local foods accounted for about 0.4 percent of total agricultural sales in the United States, compared with 0.3% in 1997 (Martinez et al., 2010). See Figure 1.
Current Trends & Developments

A number of recent trends have led to the increase in production and consumption of local foods. While farmers markets can be a fast, easy and convenient way for many to purchase local food, it can also be difficult for some consumers to make it to the market due to the limited hours and locations in which they operate. Another recent trend is the sale of local foods in supermarkets. Large retailers, such as Wal-Mart, have begun to purchase some of their food locally. Nationally, about 40 percent of food crop producers sell both in local food markets and to large supermarkets (Perkowski, 2011). Yet another trend in local foods is cooperatives, where people will share the crop of a farm, also known as CSAs. In 1986 there were only 2 CSAs in the United States. By 2001, there were 761 and in 2005 there were over 1,144 CSA’s in the U.S. (Adam, 2006).

The government has recently increased its farm-to-school programs where local farms are used to supply food for school meal programs. Current estimates show more than 2,051 farm-to-school programs are currently operating in 35 states (School Nutrition Association, 2011). Figure 2 shows growth in farm-to-school programs from 1996 to 2009.

Additionally, an increased number of farmers markets have begun to accept SNAP benefits by adopting EBT technology at local markets. Between 2008 and 2009, the total value of SNAP redemptions nearly doubled, from over $2 million to over $4 million. However, the number of SNAP benefits redeemed at farmers markets and farm stands
since 2009 represents less than one-hundredth of one percent of total farmers market sales. (USDA Ag-Marketing Services, et al., 2010)

**Figure 2. Growth in Farm to School Programs**

![Growth in farm to school programs, 1996 - 2009](image)

Source: National Farm to School Network

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**Buyer/User Analysis**

Consumers of locally grown foods in the United States seem to be demographically diverse. However, some studies did find that farmers market patrons are likely to be female, middle to older aged, married, employed, with higher levels of education and income. A recent study points to the average age of a local food consumer to be 46 with a mean income of $56,000. (Conner et al., 2010).

Most consumers of locally grown foods are health conscious individuals. They pay particular attention to the foods they consume and where they come from. Some are environmentally conscious as well. They live "green" lifestyles and believe in environmental sustainability. Other consumers of locally grown food have strong ties in their local community and will purchase locally grown foods to support local farmers,
thus supporting the local economy. The behaviors that are common among local food patrons are the enjoyment of cooking, growing food in a garden, visiting health food stores and buying organic food. These individuals also tend to be members of environmental groups. (Martinez et al., 2010)

Jennifer Dennis of the Departments of Horticulture, Landscape Architecture and Agricultural Economics at Purdue University summed up the psychographics of this group by saying, “Purchasers of organic products highly value attributes such as safety, the environmental impacts of agricultural production practices, general health and nutrition impacts, freshness and flavor” (Dennis, 2005).

Target Market Segmentation

Primary Target Market:

The primary target market for this campaign is families in northwest Minnesota. Messages will be primarily focused towards married woman, with children, with average to above average education and income. These consumers are health conscious, concerned about the environment, have close ties to their community, enjoy cooking, gardening, shopping at health food stores and have “green” lifestyles.

Secondary Target Market

A secondary target market that should be targeted is individuals in northwest Minnesota that participate in the SNAP program. Research has indicated that this is a large, untapped market.
Marketing Objectives:

In order to develop brand loyalty, consumers must go through the steps in the communications effects pyramid as outlined in Figure 3.

Figure 3: Communication Effects Pyramid

Objective 1: Raise awareness of locally grown foods among 90% of consumers in northwest Minnesota by July 1, 2012 through the use of special events, print and broadcast media.

Objective 2: Seventy percent of consumers in northwest Minnesota will have knowledge on locally grown foods by August 1, 2012 through the use of special events, print media and broadcast media.

Objective 3: Forty percent of consumers will have a positive attitude toward (liking) toward locally grown foods by September 1, 2012 through the use of special events, sampling and the use of social media.

Objective 4: Twenty-five percent of consumers will have a preference for locally grown foods by June 1, 2013 through the use of sampling and special events.

Objective 5: Twenty percent of consumers in northwest Minnesota will have attended a farmers market and made at least one purchase by August 1, 2013 through the use of special events, radio and word of mouth.

Objective 6: Five percent of consumers in northwest Minnesota will be regular purchasers of locally grown foods from farmers markets, CSAs and/or local food coops by September 31, 2012 through the use of customer relationship programs such as email marketing and Facebook.
Creative Recommendations

The new branding and logo for Rivers and Prairies Local Foods is identified below. This logo (“label”) should be utilized whenever possible to promote local foods and farmers markets in northwest Minnesota.

Since the label does not fit well on advertisements, it is recommended that a similar logo be used in advertisements to promote the farmers markets in the “rivers and prairie” region. This logo could also be used in conjunction with the Minnesota Grown logo and slogan, “Fresh From Your Neighbor.” A sample farmers market logo is shown in Figure 4, and the Minnesota Grown logo is shown in Figure 5.

Figure 4: Rivers and Prairie Farmers Market Logo
Broadcast Media Recommendations

It is recommended that radio advertising be utilized to promote the beginning of the farmers market season. Each of the 11 regional farmers markets should hold a “kick-off” event at the beginning of the farmers market season (see public relations section). It is recommended that radio remotes be utilized to help promote the kick-off event. Radio remotes are live on-site radio broadcasts and are usually associated with special events and sales promotions. It is recommended that radio remotes be done on Lite Rock 104.3 FM (Leighton Broadcasting). Lite Rock 104.3 reaches most of the region, except the Warroad and Baudette markets, and is targeted to women ages 25 to 54. The station plays adult contemporary music. It is recommended that radio remotes be done in all markets, except Warroad and Baudette, which are not serviced by this station. The total cost per 2-hour remote is $550 for a grand total of $4,950. (Leighton Broadcasting, 2010) Station information can be found in Appendix I.

Print Media Recommendations

Minnesota Newspaper Association (MNA)

It is recommended that a local foods awareness ad be placed with the MNA. MNA allows ads to be placed in all participating newspapers in a specific area. The “north” zone covers the northern half of the state and would reach all of the farmers markets in the region except for the Dillworth market. A 2 X 2 ad should be placed for 4 consecutive weeks beginning the week of May 21 and ending the week of June 11th. The cost (per week) is $600 for a total of $2400.
It is recommended that the NWRSDP partner with the Northeast Regional Sustainable Development Partnership to share the cost and message of the ad. This would bring the total cost of this marketing opportunity to $1,200 for each region. A sample ad is shown in Figure 6.

**Figure 6: Sample MNA Advertisement**

![Sample MNA Advertisement](image)

**Support Media Recommendation**

**Posters**

Posters should be developed promoting each of the farmers markets in the region. The posters should include the “Rivers and Pines Farmers Market” logo along with the day(s) and locations of each of the farmers markets in the region. These posters should be placed on the doors of local business establishments in the towns of each market. It is imperative that the posters are placed on entry doors in order to gain the attention of the most consumers. Laminated 16 X 20 posters can be ordered for free from the Minnesota Grown website.

**Window Clings**

The NWRSDP should have car window clings that have the “Rivers and Prairie Local Foods” label imprinted. These window clings should be distributed at each of the farmers markets in the region during the kick-off events. A total of 500 – 4X2 static clings can be purchased for approximately $740 (Absorbent Ink, 2012). These clings should be distributed to consumers in conjunction with the special events listed later in this report. The window clings should also be distributed to regional businesses that support Rivers and Prairie Local Foods and placed on the store windows or door fronts. These clings will help to increase awareness of local foods at establishments that sell them in the region.
Reusable Shopping Bags

Many local foods consumers are concerned about the environment and being “green.” It is recommended that reusable shopping bags be given away during special events to promote the “Rivers and Prairie Local Foods and Farmers Markets.” A black and white version of the logo should be created and imprinted on each of the bags. Two thousand bags can be purchased for approximately $0.99 each or $1,980 total. (4Imprint, 2012) These bags can be given away in conjunction with the season opener for each of the regional farmers markets.

In-Store Advertising

One of the most impactful support media that can be used to promote local foods is in-store advertising. It is most effective to expose consumers to the advertising as close as possible to the purchase decision. Rack cards will be created to promote locally grown foods at the point-of-purchase. These cards will be given to retail establishments that purchase “Rivers and Prairie Local Foods” to display next to the local foods available at each store throughout the year. The rack cards should display the “Rivers and Prairie” label. One thousand rack cards can be purchased for approximately $130 (Vistaprint, 2012)

Road Signs

Many farmers markets attract attention of people passing by in their car. It is imperative that each of the local farmers markets put up temporary road signs directing consumers to their farmers markets the day of the market. Yard signs that measure 18” X 12” can be purchased relatively inexpensively. Sixty of these signs can be purchased for approximately $500. This would allow each of the farmers markets in the region to have at least 5 signs each (Vistaprint, 2012).
Trail Blazers

Permanent “trail blazer” road signs that provide directions to motorists should be utilized. These signs are available through the Minnesota Department of Transportation. These signs point motorists in the direction of a given business or organization. The signs include the name of the business/organization, an arrow pointing the motorist in the correct direction and the number of miles to the destination. A sample is shown in Figure 7. Each sign is $10 per month. (Minnesota Department of Transportation, 2012) If each market had one sign year-round, the total cost per year would be $1,320.

Figure 7: Trailblazer Road Sign

Sales Promotions

Samples

One of the best ways to encourage consumers to purchase locally grown foods is through sampling. Sampling should take place at the farmers markets, within retail establishments that sell local foods, and at regional events (see below). The NWRSDP should partner with regional producers to have food donated for sampling. The samples could be raw foods or prepared meals/recipes.

Internet Recommendations

Website:

The NWRSDP currently has a website that is dedicated to informing consumers of all of the local food producers in the northwest Minnesota region. This site does a good job of providing a database for consumers to access, but does not provide any information on the dates, times and locations of local farmers markets. It is recommended that the NWRSDP create a website/page to promote regional farmers markets. This could be done for little to no cost by implementing a separate webpage into the current NWRSDP website, or through the use of Google Sites.
A separate domain name such as nwfarmersmarkets.com or nwmnfarmersmarkets.com should be purchased to allow for search engine optimization and to allow consumers to easily find this site and information (both of these domain names are available). This domain name can then be redirected to either the NWRSDP webpage or Google site. A domain name can be purchased for approximately $12 per year.

**Facebook**

A Facebook page promoting northwest Minnesota farmers markets should be established to help to build a sense of community in the region among the local farmers market vendors and patrons. This Facebook page can be used to update persons in the region of upcoming farmers markets, promotions and special events. This site can also be linked to the Facebook pages and websites of the participating farmers markets in the region.

A Facebook “Like” button should be placed on the “Northwest Minnesota Farmers Market” website allowing visitors to automatically become a Facebook friend. This can easily be done with the help of your website developer.

**YouTube**

Other than the cost of video production, YouTube is free to use. The RSDP should set up a YouTube channel to educated consumers on local foods and provide promotional videos/clips of the farmers markets. Sessions from the Local Foods Classroom can be posted on the YouTube Channel along with video recipes, and footage from farmers markets and regional events. A link should be provided from the NWRSDP website, farmers market website, and Facebook page to the YouTube channel.

**Blog**

The Rivers and Prairie Local Foods project should create and maintain a blog. This blog will be used to create a sense of community among locally grown purchasers and producers. An effective blog will continue to draw the attention of regional consumers throughout the year. This blog should be updated on a regular basis and should be linked with the NWRSDP website, farmers markets website, and Facebook page. Blogger is a free blogging site that can be utilized to set-up a blog for this project.
Email Marketing

With the rising cost of traditional mail, many businesses and organizations have found success utilizing email marketing. The first step in implementing email marketing is the development of a customer database. To compile a database, an email signup should be placed on the NWRSDP website and the farmers markets website. In addition, consumers visiting local farmers markets will have the opportunity to register to receive a monthly email newsletter from the Rivers and Prairie Farmers Markets. In addition, anytime that a contest/sweepstakes is utilized, the names and email addresses of each individual should be entered into the email marketing database.

A monthly e-newsletter will be sent out to the email addresses in the database. The newsletter will highlight various activities occurring during the upcoming month, tips for gardeners, and recipes for cooking with local food. There are many email marketing services that can be utilized. MailChimp is a free (up to 2,000 email addresses and 12,000 email messages per month) email marketing service that should be utilized by the regional farmers markets in northwest Minnesota. (MailChimp, 2012)

Public Relations Recommendations

County Fair Booths

It is recommend that the NWRSDP take part in event marketing at regional county fairs in order to promote locally grown foods and regional farmers markets. The booths will be run by NWRSDP staff and volunteers, as well as vendors from local farmers markets. Volunteers will inform fair goers about the benefits of buying and selling local foods. Literature should be handed out along with free promotional products. Free stickers are available from Minnesota Grown. These stickers should be obtained for each county fair and handed out to children visiting the booth. In addition, local foods informational materials, which can be obtained for free from Minnesota Grown, should be given out. Appendix III shows an example of the informational materials available through Minnesota Grown. Samples of local foods from around the area should also be offered at the booths and possibly sold in a farmers market style. There are 11 counties in the northwest region and booth fees average about $250 per booth (based on Beltrami County Fair Rates) (Beltrami County Fair, 2012)
The total cost to attend the regional county fairs listed below is approximately $3000.

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<td>August</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kittson County Fair</td>
<td>Hallock, MN</td>
<td>July</td>
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**Farmers Market Kick-Off**

Each of the farmers markets in northwest Minnesota should hold a kick-off event each spring to promote the beginning of the farmers market season. This event should be in conjunction with regularly scheduled farmers market dates and should feature entertainment (possibly a local musician), kids’ activities (face painting, games, etc.), and sampling. In addition, reusable shopping bags and window clings should be given out to the first 150 guests. These farmers market kick-off events will be advertised with posters around the community, email marketing messages, Facebook, the website, the blog, and radio advertising (as discussed above). The costs of the activities would need to be picked up by each of the farmers markets and/or they would have to secure volunteer musicians and people to assist with kids activities.

**Press Releases**

The NWRSDP should utilize press releases to publicize major events prior to the event and to provide newsworthy stories about local foods to the media in northwest Minnesota. In addition, all newsworthy items should be posted on the website (NWRSDP and Farmers Markets), as well as the Facebook page and blog.
**Evaluation**

It is imperative that all marketing actions be evaluated to determine effectiveness. This campaign will be evaluated in the following metrics:

a. Number of persons that attend each of the farmers markets
   a. The number of people that attend the farmers market should be tracked at each event. This will help to determine if more/less people are attending the market from the previous year(s)
      i. If last year’s numbers are not available, the NWRSDP can get an idea of whether there was an increase/decrease in the number of people by surveying the vendors.

b. Website analytics should be utilized to evaluate the NWRSDP local foods directory and northwest Minnesota farmers’ market website. Email marketing metrics should also be analyzed to see how many people opened, read and passed along the email message(s).

c. Sales
   a. Sales at each farmers market location, on each market day, should be tracked and compared with last year’s sales
      i. If last year’s numbers are not available, information can be learned by talking to vendors
   b. Sales of local foods in the region should be tracked.

d. Word of mouth from the blog and Facebook page can be analyzed to see what vendors and consumers are saying about the market. This can give insights on consumers/vendors perceptions and experiences at the markets.
## Budget

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<tr>
<td>BTA 5a-12m</td>
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<td>Prime 5a-8p</td>
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<tr>
<td>Specified Daypart</td>
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<td>26</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>22</td>
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- Remote
- Direct
- Broadcasts
- Two Hour
- Minimum

Single Station-$225/hour + $25 hour direct to announcer
(10-15 promos and 3-60 breaks per hour)

Five Station $500/hour + $25 hour direct to announcer
(10-15 promos and 3-60 breaks per hour)

## GROSS

<table>
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- Remote
- Direct
- Broadcasts
- Two Hour
- Minimum

Single Station-$265/hour + $25 hour direct to announcer
(10-15 promos and 3-60 breaks per hour)

Five Station $588/hour + $25 hour direct to announcer
(10-15 promos and 3-60 breaks per hour)

Leighton Broadcasting
PO Box 13838, Grand Forks, ND 58208-3638
Fed Ex: 1185 9th Street NE Thompson, ND 58278
Phone 701.775.4611
Fax 701.772.0540
www.leightonbroadcasting.com

no.0910
Appendix II – MNA Rates

Minnesota Display Ad Networks
STATEWIDE & ZONED OPTIONS

<table>
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<tr>
<td>Statewide</td>
<td>$2,400</td>
<td>$5,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Three Zones (No Metro)</td>
<td>$1,700</td>
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<tr>
<td>Two Zones (No Metro)</td>
<td>$1,150</td>
<td>$2,500</td>
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<tr>
<td>One Zone (No Metro)</td>
<td><strong>$600</strong></td>
<td><strong>$1,300</strong></td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Metro Only</td>
<td>$1,400</td>
<td>$2,950</td>
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<tr>
<td>Metro + 2 Zones</td>
<td>$2,300</td>
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<td>Metro + 1 Zone</td>
<td>$1,800</td>
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*Circulation per Zone and Value based on average circulation per zone.*
Appendix III – Local Foods Informational Materials

**Thank you for choosing to eat somewhere that cares enough to feature local Minnesota Grown products.***

Local food pays, in so many ways!

**High Quality – Fresh & Flavorful!**

- Minnesota growers raise varieties that were developed for flavor, not for their ability to withstand shipping & handling
- Local products are fresh - harvested at their peak and rushed to your plate

**Makes You Feel Good!**

- Low "food miles" = less energy consumption and less handling
- Supporting local farms keeps your dollars circulating locally
- Small family farmers are the backbone of our state; they are often superior environmental stewards

**Find Local Minnesota Grown Foods:**

- Look for the MN Grown logo at your Grocer Store or food Co-op
- Shop your farmers’ market (Minnesota has more than 125)
- Join a CSA farm for a weekly supply of fresh produce

[Images of Minnesota Grown logos]

MinnesotAGrown.com  MinnesotaGrown.com  MinnesotaGrown.com