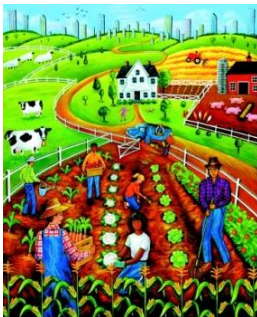


Community Food Projects

Indicators of Success

Fiscal Year 2010

Executive Summary




**Community
Food
Security
Coalition**

3830 SE Division Street • Portland, OR 97202
503-954-2970 • www.foodsecurity.org

Provided by the Community Food Security
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and Agriculture

Prepared by
National Research Center, Inc.
3005 30th Street • Boulder, CO 80301
303-444-7863 • www.n-r-c.com

Executive Summary

Introduction and Methods

The USDA-funded National Institute for Agriculture (NIFA) Community Food Projects (CFP) Competitive Grants Program (CFPCGP) was designed to meet the food needs of low-income people; to increase the self-reliance of communities in meeting their own food needs; and to promote comprehensive responses to local food, farm and nutrition issues. Since its inception in 1996, over 300 programs have been funded through CFPCGP. (CFPCGP was formerly administered through CSREES).

To assess the collective impacts of this program, the web-based Indicators of Success (IOS) was developed to track and monitor the important and common outputs and outcomes of the projects. The CFP IOS was based on the Common Output Tracking Form (COTF) originally developed in 2005 to track common activities and results among the diverse and dynamic Community Food Projects. The CFP IOS reflects a focus on outcomes (e.g., economic and social equity, healthy food access) of CFP grantees and includes a participant survey component, or the Participant Impact Survey (PS), which measures the knowledge, attitude and behavior changes of project participants.

The CFP IOS is one of two reporting vehicles requested of CFP grantees in addition to their annual required CRIS (Current Research Information Systems) report and financial documents. The CFP IOS is administered by the Community Food Security Coalition (CFSC) and is part of CFSC's Training and Technical Assistance CFP grant. Together, the four reporting vehicles collect data that demonstrate the impact of Community Food Projects towards increasing community food security across the country.

Fiscal year 2010 marked the sixth year that grantees were asked to submit data on their program activities and outcomes. Of the 81 grantees funded for fiscal year 2010, 34 completed the IOS providing a response rate of 41%. Over the six-year reporting period, 334 grantees were funded through the CFPCGP. Of these, 225 Community Food Projects completed the form – providing annual response rates ranging from 37% to 79% and a response rate overall of 60%. (The response rate in fiscal year 2010 was lower due to an end of year launch date for the new CFP IOS tools.) These data were statistically weighted to represent the results of 100% of the active grantees operating between 2005 and 2010.

CFP Indicators of Success Report Structure

This report provides a summary of the 2010 grantee IOS reporting and PS survey results, as well as estimates for the entire six years data that have been collected on CFP activities. It is structured according to the fields of *Whole Measures for Community Food Systems* (WM CFS) (<http://www.foodsecurity.org/pubs.html#wm>). These fields include Healthy People, Strong Communities, Thriving Local Economies, Vibrant Farms and Gardens, Sustainable Ecosystems and Justice and Fairness. Together, these value based practices reflect a vision for whole communities seen through the lens of community food system development. Whole Measures CFS was developed with input from over one hundred Community Food Projects.

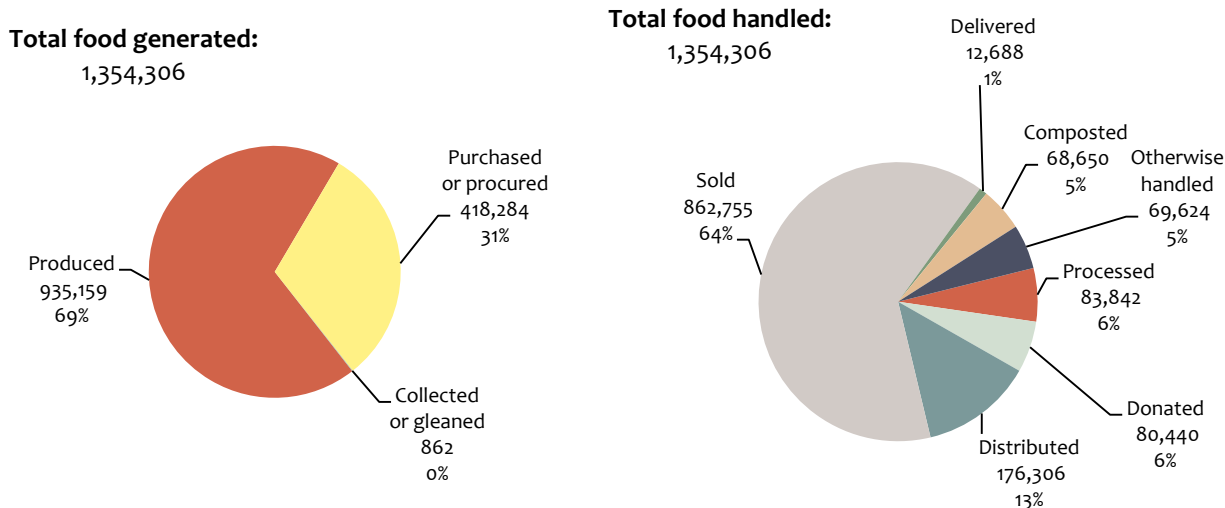
The Activities of Community Food Projects

Grantees were involved in myriad activities to support community food security the most common being food access and outreach, entrepreneurial food and agricultural activities and youth/school gardening and agricultural projects. Local food distribution, the promotion of local food purchases and provision of training and technical assistance were additional types of activities pursued by nearly one-half of the USDA sponsored food projects during the 2010 fiscal year. Youth/school projects, the promotion of local food purchases and community gardens have been the most common activities of CFPs since 2005.

HEALTHY PEOPLE

In a nation simultaneously challenged with hunger and obesity, the importance of healthy food for all is evident. In 2010, the active CFPs are estimated to have generated and handled more than 1.3 million pounds of food including fruits and vegetables, meats, dairy items, eggs and honey.

Figure 1: Methods Used to Generate and Handle Food (in Pounds), 2010



The number of people and organizations involved in and affected by these Community Food Projects during 2010 was significant. Nearly 164,000 Americans were provided food as a result of the programs and about 9,200 were K-12 students or youth attending summer programs. Customers and food recipients varied in age, race and ethnicity and most resided in low-income areas. Over 30,000 Americans receiving food from the CFPs were involved in USDA Food Assistance programs:

- 4,700 were Farmers’ Market Nutrition Program (FMNP) participants
- 11,100 were Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, formerly food stamps) recipients
- 9,300 were elderly meal recipients
- 5,400 were Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) Program recipients

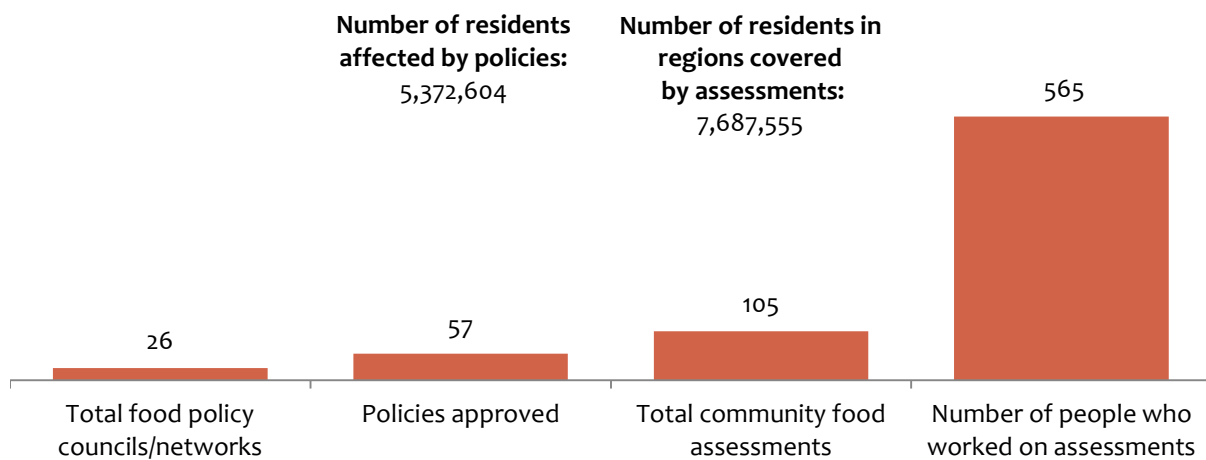
Nine of 10 CFP participants reported that they were healthier, provided healthier food for their families, and had increased their consumption of fruits and vegetables as a result of participating in

the project. Significant increases in participant knowledge and attitudes related to healthful eating and local food systems were also found.

STRONG COMMUNITIES

Creating self-reliant communities involves facilitating positive change for the existing local food system. During 2010, the USDA-funded CFPs organized about 2,100 people and partnered with 329 organizations to strengthen community infrastructure. The CFPs and their partners conducted more than 100 Community Food Assessments, formed 26 food policy councils and networks and implemented more than 57 policies aimed at increasing community food security across the nation. More than 5 million Americans lived in the communities where these system-level changes were made.

Figure 2: Food Policy Councils, Networks, Community Food Assessments and People, 2010



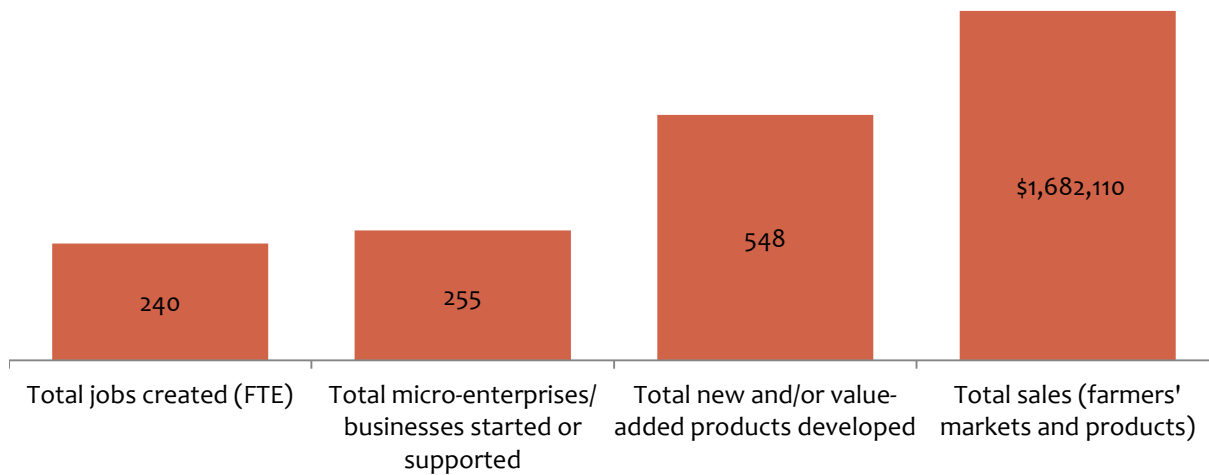
An important component to building strong communities includes building power for community members to have a voice and leadership in policies affecting their community. Many CFP participants felt a stronger connection to their local community. About 8 in 10 participants reported developing stronger leadership skills, while 7 in 10 took on greater leadership roles.

THRIVING LOCAL ECONOMIES

Increasing economic benefits to disadvantaged communities and residents through increased jobs, micro-businesses and extended customer bases for local foods are important components of community food security.

- **Jobs and Businesses:** As a result of CFPs, an estimated 240 jobs were created and 255 micro-businesses were started or strengthened. Almost 550 value-added food products were produced by farmers and agricultural workers.
- **Demand for Local Produce:** The customer base for local agriculture was expanded significantly by the CFPs with more than 500 organizations purchasing produce. Sixty of these were schools.
- **Farmers’ Market:** CFPs started 91 farmers’ markets in 2010 which generated \$1.7 million in sales.

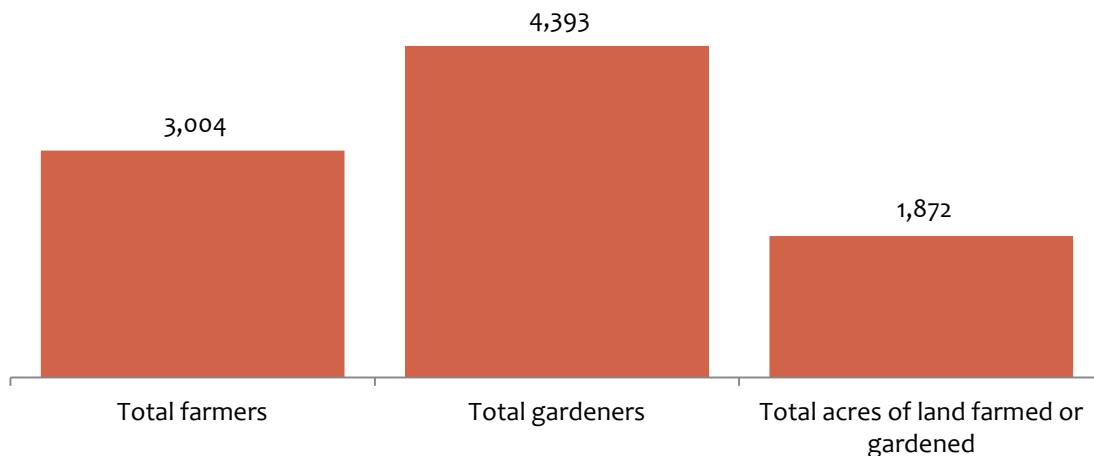
Figure 3: Jobs, Businesses and Sales 2010



VIBRANT FARMS AND GARDENS

CFP work in 2010 involved more than 3,000 farmers and the farming of more than 1,800 acres of land. In terms of community and urban gardens, CFPs are estimated to have worked with more than 4,300 gardeners and operated 865 gardens with over 3,500 gardens plots. CFPs worked locally and nationally to get more than 43 policies approved that supported small and mid-scale farms.

Figure 4: Farmers, Gardeners and Farmland, 2010

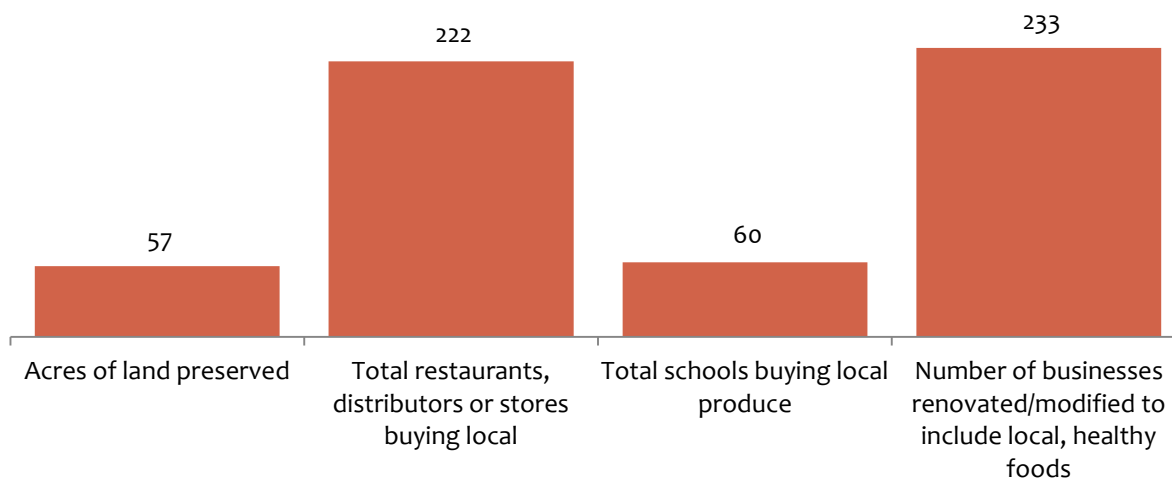


Seven in 10 farmers reported diversifying their farm products, increasing their number of customers and/or increasing the size of their local markets through participation in a CFP. More than one-half of the farmer participants reported increased incomes and the increased ability of make a living in agriculture do to the USDA program.

SUSTAINABLE ECOSYSTEMS

The preservation and use of agricultural land for farming and gardening is essential for community food reliance but also can serve a broader purpose - protection of the environment. About 57 acres of land were preserved through CFPs. Also, about 130 agricultural structures were built in 2010 with USDA funding. To increase and sustain the demand for local agriculture, 222 restaurants/distributors/stores and 60 schools began buying local produce as part of the CFP work. In addition, 233 businesses were modified or renovated to include local, healthy foods.

Figure 5: Land Preserved and Local Food Buyers, 2010



JUSTICE AND FAIRNESS

The underlying foundation of community food security relates to the promotion of justice and fairness in communities and the food system. The indicators for Justice and Fairness are inter-woven throughout the five fields described above. Some examples of how justice and fairness has been promoted and increased in each field are:




- Increased health and local food consumption by communities of color and low income communities (Healthy People)
- Increased leadership among people of color in food policy councils (Strong Communities)
- Increased jobs and micro-business opportunities for people of color and individuals with low-incomes (Thriving Local Economies)
- Seven out of ten farms increased their economic stability through diversifying products, increasing customers, and/or increasing their local market through involvement with the CFP (Vibrant Farms and Gardens)
- Increased number (233) of businesses were modified to include local, healthy foods (Sustainable Ecosystems)




Community Food Projects that understand the connection between food insecurity, race, class and privilege are better equipped to implement activities that confront and change these dynamics. For example, more than 70% of community food project participants who were interviewed about social justice issues cited significant increases in their knowledge and behaviors related to dismantling race, class and privilege barriers in the food system (Strong Communities).

Conclusion

Although this report only captures a subset of the work completed by USDA funded food projects, the progress made across all grantees is substantial. People are learning about the food system and taking on new leadership roles, acres of new land are being farmed and protected, healthy food is being delivered to residents in underserved areas and in schools and jobs and micro-businesses are being created. Systems change also is occurring through advocacy and new policy initiatives (see Figure 6). These system-wide findings demonstrate the important and integral role of Community Food Projects toward creating food security in communities across America.

Figure 6: Community Food Security at a Glance

Whole Measures (WM) Field	Indicator of Success	2010	2005-2010
Healthy People 	Pounds of food generated and handled	1.3 million	20 million
	-- pounds produced	935,000	5 million
	-- pounds donated	80,000	800,000
	-- pounds sold	860,000	6 million
	Customers and food recipients	164,000	2.7 million
	-- FMNP participants	4,700	109,800
	-- SNAP recipients	11,100	101,000
	-- SFMNP meal recipients	9,300	58,000
	-- WIC Program recipients	5,400	52,600
	-- school or summer youth meal recipients	9,200	1.8 million
Strong Communities 	Food policy councils/networks formed	26	65
	Organizations represented on the councils or networks	329	890
	Individuals on the council(s) or network(s) and participants assuming new or enhanced leadership roles in the community*	2,100	2,100
	-- those who are people of color*	1,165	1,165
	Approved policies	57	540
	-- people affected by policies	5.3 million	39 million
	Community food assessments completed	105	463
	-- people affected by assessments	7.6 million	23 million
Thriving Local Economies 	FTE jobs created	240	2,600
	Micro-enterprise opportunities/micro-businesses started or supported	255	3,800
	Farmers' markets started*	90	90
	-- sales of farmers' markets*	\$1.7 million	\$1.7 million
	New and/or value-added products developed	550	1,600
	-- sales of products*	\$8,000	\$8,000

Whole Measures (WM) Field	Indicator of Success	2010	2005-2010
Vibrant Farms and Gardens 	Farmers participating	3,000	13,700
	-- those participating in farmers' markets*	2,500	2,500
	Gardeners participating	4,400	28,000
	Acres of land farmed or gardened	1,900	58,000
	Gardens operated	3,500	12,700
	Number of policies approved that support small- and mid-scale farmers *	40	40
Sustainable Ecosystems 	Acres of land preserved	57	3,000
	Restaurants/distributors/stores buying local	220	700
	Schools buying local produce	60	2,700
	Businesses renovated/modified to include local, healthy food*	230	230
	Structures built*	130	130
	Community kitchens built	5	30
Justice and Fairness  <p>(These indicators are represented in a WM CFS field above and repeated here.)</p>	Pounds of food generated and handled	1.3 million	20 million
	Customers and food recipients	164,000	2.7 million
	-- FMNP participants	4,700	109,800
	-- SNAP recipients	11,100	101,000
	-- SFMNP meal recipients	9,300	58,000
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	Individuals on the council(s) or network(s) and participants assuming new or enhanced leadership roles in the community*	2,100	2,100
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FTE jobs created	240	2,600	
Micro-enterprise opportunities/micro-businesses started or supported	255	3,800	
Schools buying local produce	60	2,700	
Businesses renovated/modified to include local, healthy food*	230	230	

* Tracking of this indicator began in 2010.