

USDA-NIFA AFRI Project Directors Meeting  
Agricultural Economics and Rural Communities  
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## Impacts from Indicators: Immediate and Longer Term Products from the Indicators for Impact Project

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# A few acknowledgements...

Besides NIFA (2014-68006-21857), we would specifically like to thank:

Lauren Suerth of the UW-Madison, and market managers in seven states around the country that we were thankful to work with.

# NIFA-AFRI Context

- NIFA puts knowledge into practice...
  - advance agricultural research, education, and extension to solve societal challenges;
  - Identifying and scaling up innovation is important, e.g.
    - Obesity prevention, Food security, Develop human capital...
- ASSISTS FARMERS MARKET MANAGERS IN COLLECTING AND USING DATA –
  - at the intersection of production, distribution, retail, health, etc.

# Farmers Markets

- Decades of Scholarship
  - Pyle 1971, FM in the US: Functional Anachronisms
  - Shakow 1981, The Municipal FM as an Urban Service
  - Morales, Balkin and Persky 1995, Economic and Non-economic Benefits of Chicago's Maxwell Street Market
  - Payne, 2002. U.S. Farmer's Markets—2000: A Study of Emerging Trends
- Ongoing research on many topics
  - Historical studies and Race, Community and Urban Development, Health and Food security/Nutrition Assistance, Economic Contribution/Impacts, Customer/retail research on price etc., Law and policy,
  - Market Operations, and etc.
- This last is what we tackled for several reasons:

# Project Goals

- Pilot test a refined set of metrics and data collection protocols,
- Capacitate market managers for data collection, reporting, and communications; and
- Enable deployment of data collection practices by market managers around the country.
- Produce a longitudinal data base for applied and basic research.



# Research Process

- Year 1 (2014-15), metric operationalization, data collection processes and instructions.
- Year 2 (2015), data collection by markets
  - Managers used project materials to implement data collection for their market,
  - Managers then entered data into on-line portal.
  - IFI evolved into MIFI with the support of a Vilas award to Morales
  - Metrics and Indicators for Impact  
<https://mifimarkets.org>

# Implementation and Evaluation Research

- Year 3 (NCE-11/2017) market data collection
  - Webinar in March 2017 sharing best practices
    - Hernando MS used project data to win a \$50,000 award to support senior citizen transportation to their market.
  - USDA Hatch award to Shaw and Morales is completing usability testing on the MIFI platform and making appropriate changes
  - MIFI RDBG subcontract to Maine Federation of Farmers Markets, FMPP to Madison - REAP

# Data Collection

- Market Profile (annual), provides data about relatively stable features of the market, e.g. sales tax, business model, number of employees/volunteers, production standards farmers use, etc.
- Managers deploy a custom Data Collection Package from four broad categories of metrics, community, economic, ecological, and human.
  - Techniques include surveys, vendor applications to the market, etc.
- Four metrics are standard to our eight pilot markets (and a dozen markets in WI), annual sales, number of visitors, acres in production, and miles to market
- 20+ custom, and we'll be responsive to new needs for metrics

# Sample Metric Reports



## PORTLAND FARMERS MARKET

Your local connection to Maine's farming community since 1768!

### DID YOU KNOW...



**6**  
Times the average visitor comes to  
a market in a year,  
but many come **weekly!**



**4**  
Vendors the average visitor  
purchases food and wares from



**6**  
Miles the average visitor travels  
to one of our markets



### DEERING OAKS PARK

Late April - Late November  
7:00am to 1:00pm

### MONUMENT SQUARE

Apr - Dec (some year-round)  
7:00am to 1:00pm

### WINTER MARKET

December - Late April  
9:00am to 1:00pm

Whether it's early spring, the heat of summer, a crisp fall morning, or a snowy winter day,  
we have markets year round to keep you connected to Maine's farms and eating healthy!

# Sample Metric Reports

## 2016 Crossroads Farmers Market



\$ 204,246

Total market sales



\$ 16.22

Average spending in market



\$ 32.59

Average spending at neigboring businesses



\$ 6,342

Total incentives or voucher program sales



49.20 mi

Average distance from farm to market

1,256 ac

Total cultivated or grazed acres (estimated annually)



1,105

Average number of visitors per market day

86 %

Of visitors are from local zip codes



38

Average number of vendors per market day



3,450 lb

Total pounds of food donated by vendors (estimated annually)



31 %

Of vistors walking, biking, carpooling, or taking public transportation to market



1,257

Total number of volunteer hours (estimated annually)



Wednesday 11:00AM - 3:00 PM Anne St

f @CrossroadsCommunityFoodNetwork

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# Once the data is collected... Analysis and Reporting

Market managers can answer some important questions:

- “How is this market benefiting consumers, community, vendors?”
- “How can the market use the data to report the benefits from its various activities?”
- Over time, scholars can also use the data to advance policy and address various research questions.
  - Market Income,
  - Community engagement,
  - Public Health and ecological variables,
  - Production practices, and etc.



# Currently

Besides the work of the Hatch Usability testing we have:

- ✓ USDA RDBG contract with the Maine Federation of Farmers Markets (2017).
- ✓ USDA FMPP contract with Madison REAP to do regional economic analyses (2017-18).
- ✓ University of Wisconsin – state-wide work on obesity prevention will use MIIFI to help understand and incentivize healthy food access
- ✓ Many grants and contracts under review.

# Practical Products

- Managers, vendors, and partners have gained practical knowledge of citizen science and communications.
- Set of refined metrics
  - Economic
  - Ecological
  - Human
  - Social
- Updated and tested data collection protocols
  - Survey (vendor sales slip, visitor survey)
  - Observation (visitor count)
  - Operations Research (vendor applications)
- Metrics & Indicators Portals
  - UW and FMC are using lessons learned from the research to develop web-based data collection and reporting tools.
- Important Manager Training Materials

# Outreach and Scholarly Products

- Project team (FMC and UW) has done at least 70 lectures to state FMA, conferences, public talks, etc.
- Trained 9 graduate and undergraduate students.
- Leveraged more than \$140,000 in awards and contracts
- So far, funds supported six peer-review publications, a book, and many reports:
  - Dawson and Morales, University of Iowa press *Cities of Farmers*
  - Quintana and Morales, Learning from Listservs,
  - Archambault, Warsaw, Trivett and Morales, Money Made at the Market...
- Mifimarkets.org fee-for-service hard launch this fall.
- MIFI – Hospital Food Systems in the works.

**Thanks much...Questions?**