



CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF FOOD & AGRICULTURE
SPECIALTY CROP BLOCK GRANT PROGRAM
FINAL PERFORMANCE REPORT

USDA Project No.: FOR CDFA USE ONLY	Project Title: Engaging Social Media – The Voice of California’s Specialty Crops		
Grant Recipient: California Department of Food and Agriculture	Grant Agreement No.: SCB10011	Date Submitted:	
Recipient Contact: Steve Lyle	Telephone: 916-654-0462	Email:	

Grant Award Amount (A)	Amount Invoiced to Date (B)	Remaining Grant Balance (A-B)	Program Income	Committed Match/In-Kind Funds	Match/In-Kind Funds Spent to Date
\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$

Project Summary

- Provide a background for the initial purpose of the project, which includes the specific issue, problem, or need that was addressed by this project.
- Establish the motivation for this project by presenting the importance and timeliness of the project.
- If the project built on a previously funded SCBGP project, describe how this project complimented and enhanced previously completed work.

This project resulted in the “Growing California Video Series” which consists of 29 web-based videos highlighting various aspects of California’s specialty crop industry. This video series was designed to raise consumer awareness on the diversity of the state’s specialty crop industry to address the growing interest among consumers about their food supply. The overall objective of this project was to increase the favorable disposition of consumers to California specialty crop farmers and their products, enhancing the overall competitiveness of the industry.

The motivation for this project was prompted by the increase in consumer advocacy concerning the food system and the opportunity to provide further information to consumers about the diversity and innovations within the specialty crop sector.

This project did not build on a previously funded SCBCP project.

Project Approach

- Briefly summarize activities performed and tasks performed during the grant period. Whenever possible, describe the work accomplished in both quantitative and qualitative terms. Include the significant results, accomplishments, conclusions and recommendations. Include favorable or unusual developments.
- Present the significant contributions and role of project partners in the project.



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The project focused on a tiered approach to implementation. Videos were filmed from April 2012 to September 2013 and a social media program was launched in February 2013. By developing a number of videos prior to a social media release, the video series was able to be rolled out on a weekly basis beginning in February 2013. This weekly release of videos provided opportunities to leverage consumer social media engagement and interest to help achieve the overall objective of the program which was to increase the favorable disposition of consumers to California specialty crops.

Video production was facilitated by California State University, Sacramento – Academic Technology and Creative Services along with CDFA staff. The social media program was coordinated by CDFA staff and the Buy California Marketing Agreement.

Project team meetings were held on a consistent basis and covered pre/post production of videos along with the social media program.

CDFA's Planting Seeds Blog (<http://plantingseedsblog.cdfa.ca.gov/wordpress/>) served as the primary social media outlet for the developed videos. The blog was also promoted on Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/pages/California-Department-of-Food-and-Agriculture/83888787230>) and Twitter (<https://twitter.com/CDFANews>).

The Buy California Marketing Agreement also hosted a video page on their main website - <http://www.californiagrown.org/growing-california/>

In addition, videos were posted to CDFA's (<http://www.youtube.com/user/CDFAtoday/videos>) and Buy California Marketing Agreement's (<http://www.youtube.com/user/growninca/videos>) YouTube pages.

As a result of this project more than 9,864 views were generated on CDFA's Planting Seeds Blog, representing 16 percent of total viewership between February – September 2013. Video postings on the Planting Seeds Blog generated an additional 437 Facebook likes; 112 Tweets; and 31 LinkedIn shares.

Total viewership on the CDFA's Planting Seeds Blog from February – September 2013 increased 61 percent compared to the same period during the previous year. Daily average viewership also increased 56 percent during the same period February – September 2013

Total viewership on CDFA's Planting Seeds Blog for the tracked period was 59,071 – a 22,384 viewer increase from the previous year. Of the increased viewership – the video series is representative of approximately 44 percent of this total. Average viewership per video, as of September 2013, is estimated at 346 views.



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This project resulted in a social media based educational resource that documents the diversity of California's specialty crop industry and its farm innovations, environmental contributions and stewardship.

Goals and Outcomes Achieved

- Supply the activities that were completed in order to achieve the performance goals and measurable outcomes for the project.
- If outcome measures were long term, summarize the progress that has been made towards achievement.
- Provide a comparison of actual accomplishments with the goals established for the reporting period.
- Clearly convey completion of achieving outcomes by illustrating baseline data that has been gathered to date and showing the progress toward achieving set targets.

	Videos	Activity Completed:	Social Media Publication:
1.	Free Spirit Farmer	November 2012	February 2013
2.	Lemon Appeal	January 2013	February 2013
3.	Farm to Family	December 2012	February 2013
4.	First Line of Defense	May 2012	February 2013
5.	Chef's Guide	July 2012	February 2013
6.	Third-Generation Farmer	August 2012	February 2013
7.	Exotic Greens	February 2013	February 2013
8.	Citrus Scourge	February 2013	March 2013
9.	Love on the Vine	March 2013	March 2013
10.	Salad Bar Superstar	March 2013	March 2013
11.	Green Broker	May 2012	March 2013
12.	Urban Farmer	October 2012	April 2013
13.	Farmer's Market	July 2012	April 2013
14.	Farm Academy	October 2012	April 2013
15.	Teen Harvesters	August 2012	April 2013
16.	Cherries Galore	June 2012	April 2013
17.	Onion Power	April 2013	May 2013
18.	Delta Delicacy	May 2013	May 2013
19.	Apple Hill	November 2012	May 2013
20.	Wheel Food	May 2013	May 2013
21.	Blossom Buddies	May 2013	June 2013
22.	For the Love of Olives	May 2013	June 2013



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23.	Blooming Business	May 2013	June 2013
24.	Fun, Food, Festivals	May 2013	July 2013
25.	The Mysterious Artichoke	May 2013	July 2013
26.	Casa De Memories	September 2013	Fall/Winter 2013*
27.	Why Beans?	September 2013	Fall/Winter 2013*
28.	Almond Futures	September 2013	Fall/Winter 2013*
29.	Watermelon Masters	September 2013	Fall/Winter 2013*

* *Grant activity completed September 2013, social media publication reflective of long-term outcome measures*

Social Media Metrics:

	2012 Baseline	Performance Measure	2013 Result
Planting Seeds Blog:	36,687 views	+ 25 percent	59,071 views (+ 61%)
CDFFA YouTube Page	10,639 views	+ 25 percent	12,520 views (+ 17%)
Twitter:	3,950 followers	+ 25 percent	5,307 followers (+ 34%)
<i>Growth rate (Feb-Sept)</i>	32 percent	+ 25 percent	17 percent (- 46 %)
Facebook*:	55,177 views	+ 25 percent	26,533 views (- 51%)
<i>Viral Reach</i>	759 users	+ 25 percent	2,226 users (+ 193%)
<i>Viral Impressions</i>	2,032 users	+ 25 percent	5,375 users (+ 164%)

* *The Growing California video series in 2013 represented 24 percent of total viewership, 14 percent of generated viral reach, and 14 percent of viral impressions.*

Growing California Viewership: (February – September 2013)

Planting Seeds Blog:	9,864 views
Buy California YouTube:	5,903 views
CDFFA YouTube:	6,119 views
Facebook:	6,469 views
<i>Total views:</i>	28,355 views

The identified project goal was to increase consumer awareness on California specialty crop farmers and their products in the social media sector. The target was a 25 percent increase in the number of followers, viewership and other social media metrics. CDFFA’s Planting Seeds Blog served as the



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primary social media distributor of the Growing California video series. The blog experience a 61 percent growth over the baseline period. The Growing California video series was representative of 16 percent (9,864 views) of the increased viewership over the baseline period.

Facebook and Twitter served as secondary platforms to promote the video series. Facebook viewership decreased by an estimated 51 percent when compared to the 2012 baseline level. However, the viral reach and impressions created through Facebook increased in the 2013 performance period by more than 175 percent in each category. Viral reach and viral impression denotes the external fan base viewership of posts. The Growing California video series in 2013 represented 24 percent of total viewership, 14 percent of generated viral reach, and 14 percent of viral impressions. Twitter increased overall followers by 34 percent, but experienced a 47 percent decrease in the growth rate of new followers.

YouTube viewership compared to the baseline year represented an increase of 17 percent, below the targeted goal. The Growing California video series represented 48 percent of total video viewership and 41 percent of total minutes watched during the performance period.

The project resulted in an increase in consumer awareness concerning California specialty crops however not all target metrics in the social media categories were achieved. As a first year SCBG project more definitive baseline data has be achieved for potentially future activities.

Beneficiaries

- Provide a description of the groups and other operations that benefited from the completion of this project's accomplishments.
- Clearly state the quantitative data that concerns the beneficiaries affected by the project's accomplishments and/or the potential economic impact of the project.

Consumers with a favorable disposition to a product are more likely to purchase that product. This project increased the favorable disposition of consumers through education in the social media sector. California's 45,626 specialty crop farmers are the direct beneficiaries of this project. More than 28,000 views were recorded for the Growing California video series, exposure that contributed to an increase in overall social media viewership.

Consumer research from the Buy California Marketing Agreement, a project partner, indicates that sales of the California grown products have increased 7.1 percent in the state since the inception of the California Grown campaign. The Growing California video series is a complement to the California Grown Campaign, raising awareness on specialty crops and continuing the positive economic and societal trends that the campaign promotes.



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Lessons Learned

- Offer insights into the lessons learned by the project staff as a result of completing this project. This section is meant to illustrate the positive and negative results and conclusions for the project.
- Provide unexpected outcomes or results that were an effect of implementing this project.
- If goals or outcome measures were not achieved, identify and share the lessons learned to help others expedite problem-solving.

The Growing California video series provided an opportunity to highlight the diversity of specialty crops within the state. The start of the program had contractual barriers that delayed project implementation and revised elements of the program scope. Contractual planning for a three-year project at the state governmental level should consider a five-year minimum implementation time span.

Positive Results of Program:

- An increase in consumer awareness concerning California specialty crops. This awareness will further improve the competitiveness of the specialty crop sector.
- More than 111,000 social media impressions; 28,000 direct views; and 1,000 non-follower reach.
- Unanticipated matching/in-kind support for production of three additional videos (information/data is not included in reporting). Videos include: *Where's the Beef*; *Reedley's Gold*; and *From Service to Harvest*.

Observations/Recommendations:

- Social media marketing is an effective means to increase consumer awareness. Improved social media performance (metrics, tracking and promotion) can be achieved through contractual activity and should be considered for future projects to maximum the visibility and consumer reach.
- Metrics for a consumer awareness campaign are difficult to achieve without significant investment in pre/post research. This further validates the need for professional social media marketing services.
- The variety, scope and level of video production increased video cost above initial estimates. A baseline has now been established for future video projects and staffing.
- Project implementation delays limited video production of certain specialty crops. Original project timeline was reduced to a one-year time frame which precluded video production in some peak seasons areas. A longer project timeline (2 years) will provide opportunity to capture more diverse aspects of specialty crop production.
- Cooperation with agricultural organizations was highly successful in determining video subjects and focus. Future project would continue this joint cooperation with agricultural stakeholders.
- Complete outsourcing of video production is not recommended because of the complexity, diversity and uniqueness of the agricultural sector.



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Remaining Grant Balance

- If there is a remaining balance, explain why the project did not utilize all awarded grant funds.

All grant funding was expended.

Contact Information

- Name the Contact Person for the Project
- Telephone Number
- Email Address

Contact Information:

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Additional Information

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