

2018 Upstate Institute Summer Field School Fellowship

Title: Marketing Techniques and Consumer Education for Farmers' Markets

Community Partner: Madison County Agriculture Economic Development Program (AED)

Research on marketing techniques that drives consumers to farmers' markets for a student with excellent graphics design skills and an interest in local foods and farming.

Project Description:

A Field School Fellow will work with the county's Agriculture Economic Development Program to develop and administer consumer surveys at local farmers' markets to gauge which marketing and educational campaigns effectively drive consumers there. One survey will be administered at the beginning of the summer, and a second towards the end. Throughout the summer, the Fellow will also research and develop various marketing techniques to drive higher traffic at the markets such as flyers, posters, branding, social media, press releases, and/or educational writings on health benefits of shopping for food at markets.

The AED Program will use the data gathered and analyzed by the Fellow to educate farmers and small businesses in Madison County about marketing techniques that work. The work will also provide a financial benefit to the farmer and indirectly to the county through increased sales.

About the Community Partner:

The Agriculture Economic Development (AED) program has a unique history. Madison County has a strong agricultural community that named "Agricultural Economic Development" as one of four main goals of Madison County's [Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plan](#) in 2005. The Farmland Protection Board employed an Agricultural Economic Development Specialist to provide leadership and coordination for agricultural development and expansion as a result. The specialist is tasked with developing projects that would support and encourage a viable County ag economy, and is housed at Cornell Cooperative Extension of Madison County in Morrisville. The Agriculture Advisory Committee, as a committee of the Farmland Protection Board, was formalized and charged with setting and directing the AED program.

The AED program's mission is to maintain, develop and promote a viable agricultural economy that benefits Madison County. The primary priority for achieving this mission is to market Madison County's agricultural products and services by creating market opportunities and encouraging value-added enterprises. As a secondary priority, AED strives to maintain an appropriate agricultural land base to support a viable agricultural economy in Madison County by assisting existing Madison County farmers and attracting and supporting new farmers.

To date, the AED program has accomplished this mission through several diverse initiatives. The AED program has helped to launch several agricultural enterprises in Madison County by targeting assistance to value-added projects and agricultural start-ups through activities such as grant writing, workshops, and technical support. The AED program continues to work hard to keep farming viable in Madison County and draw public support to the county's many agricultural ventures.

Required Skills:

A Fellow will need graphic design and communications skills to complete this project, as well as experience in effective social media use. The Fellow will gain experience in working in an office setting, and will attend staff meetings and applicable staff trainings. The Fellow will visit farmers markets and farms for hands on experience and conversations regarding farmers' products and customers. The Fellow

will learn to write press releases and effective social media posts. The Fellow will also receive training on marketing and writing from industry professionals through the fellowship.

Logistics:

This is a full-time paid research position (35 hours per week) to last approximately 10 weeks, conducted under the joint supervision of the Upstate Institute and the Agriculture Economic Development Program. Supervision will be provided by Specialist Jenn Farwell. Most of the research will be based in the Cornell Cooperative Extension office in Morrisville. Field School Fellows receive a research stipend of \$4500 plus reimbursement for any costs associated with transportation for this project. A car is not required for this project, but may be helpful. A Fellow will need a U.S. drivers' license to complete this work.

Contact:

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