



When Pigs Fly Farm

PROFILE: Value Added Producer Grant Recipient

Mount Vernon, Washington

Grant Amount

\$48,160

Grant Period

2016 - 2018

Grant Summary

Grant funding increased the farm's presence at four local farmers markets, offsetting costs of packaging, labeling, merchandising, advertising, labor and produce processing.

About the Grant Recipient

When Pigs Fly Farm is a 10-acre small farm owned by Chris Hamer and located in Mount Vernon, Washington.

The farm includes two acres in fruit, herb and vegetable production, and the remaining eight acres in pasture for Highland Cattle, alpacas, free-range laying hens and bee hives.

Pigs Fly Farm has three business activities. The main focus is a Community Supported Agriculture membership program for 30 customers. Next is sales at farmers markets followed by on-farm sales of fruits and vegetables.



How is the public engaged with When Pigs Fly Farm?

The public is welcome to visit the farm and buy products, and to enjoy a farm-based experience. The CSA membership provides a deeper level of connection between customers, the farmland and the farmers.

“My future goals expand the customer experience with a commercial kitchen, cooking classes and jams made from our own fruit.”

— Chris Hamer



IMPACT OF VAPG FUNDING

While the business development goals were not all reached during the grant period, the farm income did experience growth. The model for selling CSA baskets was successfully executed throughout the grant period.

“I believe we overestimated what we could accomplish with the grant money,” said Chris Hamer.

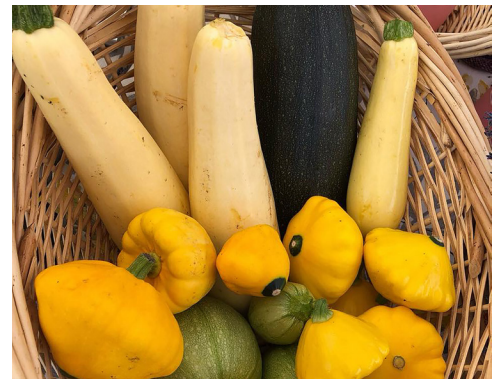
“Many farmers will find the process overwhelming.”

—Chris Hamer

ADVICE FOR OTHERS

“While it is helpful to get funds to expand your business, the grant was not designed to help with equipment and infrastructure, which was our greatest need at the time,” she said.

Hamar found the application process a challenge because of the amount of research required and the timing. Applications opened in the spring, which is prime planting time for their farm operation, and remained open for only four weeks.



Photos

Page 1 Lettuce and onions thrive in the raised bed, despite the cool early spring weather.

Page 2 Left. The farm is a bee hive of activity at planting time.

Right. The friendly alpaca is a visitor favorite and source of fiber.

Below: Squash harvest in the summer.

©2018. Funding provided by the Agriculture Marketing Resource Center (AgMRC), located at Iowa State University, www.agmrc.org. AgMRC is a national website dedicated to providing information to producers and service providers on value-added agriculture businesses. These partners collaborated to create the Value Added Producer Grant Profiles:

