

October 29, 1997

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UNIVERSITY OF VERMONT
Office of Sponsored Programs
340 Waterman Building
Burlington, Vermont 05405-0160

Re: SARE/ACE Project FNE95-85 94-Coop-1-0482

Gentlemen:

This is my final report for the above referenced project. The goal of my project was to explore ways to extend the growing season for vegetable crops to be sold fresh at local Farmers Markets. The crops selected were Tomatoes, Eggplant, Peppers and Melons.

Our Farm has expanded to 14.02 acres since 1995 and we have added two more markets to our weekly schedule. We currently have myself, my husband and my mother working full-time during the months of March thru November. We have invested approximately \$20,000 in worksaving equipment to help us plant, cultivate and harvest our 1.0 acres of raspberries, 2.0 acres of grapes, 4.0 acres of apples, 2.0 acres of strawberries and approximately 2.0 acres of vegetables.

Our project outreach program was to entail a seminar in March the following year to be sponsored by R.E.A.P. which is the entity running the Farmers Markets. The seminar would have been the results of the project as far as the time which was extended in the spring to bring the vegetable crops to market earlier than unusual for our location and climate. Data was to be compiled and analyzed by myself and cooperative extension agent, David Swaciak. We also made available to the local schools for "Ag in the Classroom" projects our farm during the harvesting season.

We contracted with a local greenhouse grower to start tomatoe, eggplant, pepper and melon plans one month earlier than the norm for this zone. We picked up our plants in March and transferred them to a cold frame at our farm. We proceeded to transplant into 6" pots and placed them in an outside protected location in early April. The tomatoes and eggplant went fairly well but the peppers and melons did not transplant well nor did they enjoy the colder temperatures of the outside area and their growth was exceedingly slow. Also, aphids picked up in the greenhouse destroyed the peppers and eggplant. We continued the project with the tomatoes and melon plants. IN late April, early May we transplanted in the permanent location in the garden. Again, progress was slow due to cold temperatures and the melon plants did not make it. At this point, we had approximately 1/3 of our tomatoe plants which looked


healthily. When they were set out they already had green tomatoes approximately 3 to 4 inches in diameter. See enclosed pictures.

We did not reach our goal. Tomatoes were harvested from these plants in mid August. Our goal was for late July or early August. Since we had no data to analyze, we did not ask David Swaciak to work on the project. I spent one week trying to replace the destroyed plants by buying new ones from another greenhouse grower, but since these plants were started in February not January, we were behind in our schedule and simply could not catch up.

I feel that the idea was a good one. More thought and money should be placed on the outside location to protect plants from wind and cold in order for them to maintain their rate of growth. If this was done, fresh, ripe tomatoes could reach the market in Late July. I am not sure if this would be cost effective, at least in the Farm Markets I am involved in.

We have included some photos of the early potting and the condition of plants early on in the project. We are also including the final financial report as asked. If you have other questions, please call me at (716) 938-6061.

Sincerely,


Jeanne L. Giambrone
Project Coordinator