

<b>Title:</b>	<b>Portland Beginning Farmer Partnership</b>		
<b>Sponsoring Agency</b>	NIFA	<b>Project Status</b>	COMPLETE
<b>Funding Source</b>	Non Formula	<b>Reporting Frequency</b>	Annual
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<b>Reporting Period Start Date</b>	09/01/2012	<b>Reporting Period End Date</b>	08/31/2015
<b>Submitted By</b>	Seth Belber	<b>Date Submitted to NIFA</b>	12/04/2015

**Program Code:** BFRDP

**Program Name:** Beginning Farmer and Rancher

**Project Director**

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**Recipient Organization**

MERCY ENTERPRISE CORPORATION  
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**Performing Department**

{NO DATA ENTERED}

**Co-Project Directors**

{NO DATA ENTERED}

**Departments**

{NO DATA ENTERED}

**Non-Technical Summary**

State leaders are concerned about the rising age of Oregon's farmers indicated in the most recent US Census of Agriculture. The average age of farmers in Oregon is 58 and only 5% of Oregon farmers are 35 years of age or younger. The number of farms in Oregon fell by 5,000 between 2002 and 2007. Katy Coba, director of the Oregon Department of Agriculture, notes she is "concerned by the numbers." Oregon needs a new influx of farms and farmers to keep the industry thriving into the future. Our goal is to help new farmers in the Portland, Oregon area start and run profitable businesses. We are creating a partnership of three established nonprofit and public entities with extensive outreach and training expertise to new farmers. The Portland Beginning Farmer Partnership will help 125 new farmers succeed by offering an integrated set of support services focused on education, land, capital and marketing.

**Accomplishments**

**Major goals of the project**

We will help 125 new farmers in the Portland, Oregon area to start and run profitable businesses. We are seeking a Standard Grant to create a partnership of three established public and private entities with extensive outreach and training expertise for new farmers. The Portland Beginning Farmer Partnership will help beginning farmers succeed by offering an integrated set of support services focused on education, land, capital and marketing.

**What was accomplished under these goals?**

**Impact:** Over the grant cycle the Portland Beginning Farm Partnership worked to effectively and successfully to connect beginning farmers in the Portland area with land access, educational materials, support services, and marketing assistance to establish small-scale farming enterprises while building skills, connections, resources to find success. Through the pairing of Mercy Corps Northwest's Refuge Gardens program with Oregon State University's Beginning Urban Farming Apprenticeship (BUFA), the partnership was able to reach out to diverse groups of interested and beginning farmers with training and resources tailored to their needs and backgrounds. At the close of the grant period, at least 11 agricultural enterprises assisted by the Portland Beginning Farm Partnership are in operation with other participants employed in food and agriculture related fields.

**Accomplishments:**

**Land Access**

- 120 refugee participants accessed land for agricultural production and training through the Mercy Corps NW Refuge Gardens Program
- 75 beginning urban farmers accessed land for production and training through the Beginning Urban Farmer Apprenticeship

Program (BUFA)

### **Farmers Increase Skills and Access Training**

-57 refugee participants showed improved growing skills in four of the five core learnign objectives:

- Soil Fertility
- Irrigation Management
- Crop Planning
- Business Record Keeping
- Post-Harvest Handling

-72 Beginning Urban Farmers received classroom and hands on training in the following core areas

- Soil management including fertilizers, compost, mulch, and cover crops
- Intensive vegetable production using hand and and small power tools
- Berry and fruit tree production and edible landscaping
- Ecological landscape management including native and ornamental plants
- Organic Integrated Pest management (IPM) with special emphasis on weed control
- Farm/landscape infrastructure including irrigation, materials choices, and installation.
- Farm business planning and marketing
- Community resources and next steps

### **Farmers Gain Market Access and Knowledge of Market Conditions**

-19 Farm businesses accessed markets through the Refuge Gardens marketing program

-Refugee Participants accessed 660 hours of hands on direct marketing training at Refuge Gardens farm marketing outlets

-32 refugee participants aprticipated in field trips to produce marketing outlets and reported increased knowledge of local market conditions and steps needed to develop market outlets for produce

### **Farm Businesses Increase Productivity**

-19 refugee led farm enterprises grossed \$123,765 of produce sales through the Refuge Gardens collective marketing program over the grant period

-Returning farms participating in Refuge Gardns collective marketing averaged growth in per/acre sales of 18% over their baseline year.

### **Farmers Build Collaborative Networks**

-57 refugee farmers and 72 beginnign urban farmers (129 total farmers) developed connections with at least two new farm businesses and/or market outlets

### **What opportunities for training and professional development has the project provided?**

{Nothing to report}

### **How have the results been disseminated to communities of interest?**

{Nothing to report}

### **What do you plan to do during the next reporting period to accomplish the goals?**

{Nothing to report}

### **Participants**

{Nothing to report}

### **Target Audience**

Beginning farmers with emphasis on new farmers with refugee status. Specifically, work was done with members of the Karen and Zomi ethnic communitites from Myanmar as well as members of the ethnic Nepali community from Bhutan (Lotshampas).

### **Products**

{Nothing to report}

**Other Products**

{Nothing to report}

**Changes/Problems**

During the reporting period the following changes took place:

The former Project Director, David Beller left the project and was replaced by the new Project Director Seth Belber.

Project partner organization Grow Portland disbanded its affiliation with the Portland Beginning Farm Partnership, with their partnership responsibilities assumed by Mercy Corps Northwest.