

**Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection**  
**Division of Agricultural Development**  
**Agricultural Development & Diversification Program (ADD)**

**Grant Project Final Report**

Contract Number: 17066

Grant Project Title: Adding Value by Developing a Unique Identity for Wisconsin Specialty  
Cranberry Products

Amount of Funding Awarded: \$7,500.00

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Report Submitted: 11/10/03

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Adding Value by Developing A Unique Identity for Wisconsin Specialty  
July 1, 2002 to October 31, 2003

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The purpose of the grant was to develop a line of cranberry products under a single name that gave a brand image to Wisconsin cranberry products manufactured in Wisconsin. Also, to create new markets and expand on existing markets and promote year-round cranberry consumption.

Steps taken to reach the goal included:

- A logo, name and design were created for the labels.
- Contacted private label manufacturers to see who would work with us and what our choices in product line would be. Find out how long the process would take to get going and what would fit our timeline and budget.
- Met with graphic designer on the labels.
- Negotiated initial order sizes.
- Ordered labels to fit products. Developed wording for each label.
- Developed in-store display.
- Planned initial press release and media publicity.
- Developed mail order catalog.
- Added items to website store.
- Developed on-line internet sales on the website.

The products identified using cranberries were:

- Catsup
- Apple/cranberry butter
- Relish
- Spread
- Syrup
- Cranberry Chip Cookie Mix
- Cranberry Oatmeal Cookie Mix

The biggest obstacle initially was “getting the word out”. The second obstacle was getting the people to try some of the products like cranberry catsup to begin with.

What worked? Getting press on the items, running specials to get people to try the products and the best tool of all—samples. Samples to the media, samples at the state fair and in-house samples at the Cranberry Museum. While customers may have been reluctant to try the products, they would usually take you up on a free sample. Sales always picked up when samples were available. Recipes worked great, too. Many times a customer would ask, “How would I use a cranberry relish?” The staff was ready with the answer. Surveys were done with some of the motorcoach clientele at the museum. Simple questions on what they liked or did not like. General coverage of the Warrens area on the food channel and Discover Wisconsin helped bring people in to purchase products.

Things that did not work as well as we hoped were:

- Cookie mixes. People aren’t baking as much, even if they just have to add a few things to the mix. Plus people are more health conscious. They’d rather have a spread or a relish than a cookie. These sales picked up in the fall of the year but overall were poor sellers.
- Cranberry Catsup. It was hard to get people to try the catsup.
- It is difficult to get the mass production cost down to a better price.

We accomplished the following things:

- Created an image and logo that people have come to look for when purchasing Wisconsin cranberry products. Developed a keen awareness of cranberry products and how you can use them. Made people aware of where they can purchase them.
- Had sales of more than 3500 Berry Best products.
- Some smaller cranberry companies have contacted us to put their products on line and carry them in the gift shop. We think this shows we are getting noticed for the work we are doing.

There were challenges along the way. It has been difficult to find a manufacturer who will package the relish, spread and apple/cranberry butter in 8 or 10 ounce jars, in a profitable way.

There were obstacles developing the Internet on-line sales. Compatibility with the existing credit card network and the bank had to be better developed. Developing an understanding of the secure network was a challenge. For instance, did we need to be secure, or very secure? Some changes had to be made to make it work together.

This project has shown us what potential is out there. That people are willing to try new products if they know how to use them and where to purchase them.

As a result of this project we plan to do more sampling demonstrations. I think it would be a great idea to target grocery stores for sampling demonstrations. And to offer samples to some area restaurants so people can become familiar with our products.

In the future we plan to work on developing a “sampler” gift box for sale; try and develop a maple/cranberry syrup and replace the catsup with a salsa or a grilling sauce.

We would also like to develop some targeted e-marketing for our products and specials. For example we have a list of e-mails from the state fair of people interested in cranberry products. We have e-mailed them information on fresh cranberries and on our line of products on the Internet.

We would like to develop a stronger year around advertising campaign of how to use cranberry products each season of the year.

The agricultural industry can use these results in the following way:

- The key to marketing is getting the product in front of the people. People's habits are very different from ten years ago. People are busier. I think the key to marketing is to go where the people go—grocery stores, restaurants, libraries, video stores, festivals, financial institutions, churches and department stores. Partner with them to do samplings, have the church dinner sample some products, get them to use your products to familiarize people with them and always hand out ways to use the products or recipes. Put information on how to purchase the products on the recipe and idea cards.
- Use the news media to get the word out. Write up stories about the products and how to use them. Find new ways to use them and write about it. Find ways to weave information on a product into what is already happening.
- Create an image and stick with it in all your advertising so people recognize what it is when they see it.

Submitted by: Bernadine Arena  
11/10/03