



NEWS RELEASE

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CONNER AWARDS NEARLY \$1 MILLION TO PROMOTE FARMERS MARKETS

WASHINGTON, Oct. 1, 2007 - Acting Agriculture Secretary Chuck Conner today announced 23 grants totaling \$900,000 under the Farmers Market Promotion Program. The awards will aid local governments, nonprofit and economic development corporations and agricultural cooperatives in 16 states and the District of Columbia. Funds will support projects that establish, expand and promote farmers markets and other direct producer-to-consumer market opportunities.

"Farmers markets are increasingly becoming a larger and more integral part of our rural and urban communities," Conner said. "We support this community spirit that helps increase farmer revenues, and provides consumers with fresh, local farm products."

The Farmers Market Promotion Program is designed to provide assistance to local farmers markets, roadside stands, and community supported agriculture in an effort to increase domestic consumption of agricultural commodities and improve farmers' income. The grants are authorized under the amended Farmer-to-Consumer Direct Marketing Act of 1976.

In this second year of funding, USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS), which administers the program, will grant awards for the following projects:

ARKANSAS - \$45,666 to the East Arkansas Resource Conservation and Development Council, Inc., Jonesboro, Ark., to research farmers' and customers' needs and create educational programs for farm vendors at the ASU Regional Farmers Market on business practices and crop planning.

CALIFORNIA - \$49,275 to the Agriculture and Land-Based Training Association, Salinas, Calif., to develop four new farmers markets and four church-based farm stands which target culturally diverse and health distressed communities. Funds also will be used to provide training and technical assistance to limited-resource farmers and implement outreach and education programs to expand demand for direct-marketed products.

\$35,617 to the Mendocino County Farmers' Market Association, Fort Bragg, Calif., to establish community supported agriculture at five farmers markets, expand two existing ones and implement an outreach and educational campaign to broaden the customer base at the Association's eight farmers markets.

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DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA - \$41,312 to the Food Research and Action Center, Washington, DC, to develop EBT (electronic benefits transfer) infrastructure for four farmers markets in the District, and provide EBT training to farmers market staff.

HAWAII - \$29,300 to the Hawaii Farm Bureau Federation, Honolulu, Hawaii, to establish and promote a new producer-only farmers market in Waianae, Oahu, that will offer fresh fish and agricultural products, which will provide farmers and fishers in the area a new direct-to-consumer market channel.

IDAHO - \$60,294 to Hagerman I.D.E.A. (Improvement, Development, Education and Appreciation), Inc., Hagerman, Idaho, to create an agricultural marketing cooperative where producers sell their own products directly to consumers via the Internet.

INDIANA - \$38,000 to the City of West Lafayette, Ind., to establish a "Green and Lean" marketing program at the Sagamore West Farmers' Market that will include an advertising campaign with educational materials for vendors and consumers to promote healthy eating, physical fitness and personal safety.

\$15,844 to the Plainfield Chamber of Commerce, Plainfield, Ind., to establish a second farmers market at the Metropolis Mall, with promotional advertising, consumer-based education to attract customers and enhance the viability of the new market location.

IOWA - \$8,128 to Golden Hills Resource Conservation and Development, Oakland, Iowa, to establish and promote the new Riverside Farmers Market through advertising to consumers, farmer recruitment and training and educational events linking fresh food with community health and wellness.

MICHIGAN - \$8,430 to the City of Bad Axe Department of Parks & Recreation, Bad Axe, Mich., for advertising and promotional campaign activities to increase patronage at the Bad Axe Farmers Market, which is located near the intersection of two major roads with substantial tourist traffic.

MISSOURI - \$70,150 to Top of the Ozarks Resource Conservation & Development, Inc., Houston, Mo., to assess the needs of 12 farmers markets in 10 South Central Missouri counties; determine how to best meet these needs; and improve visibility of the markets through advertising, product mix, infrastructure improvements, vendor training and communication.

OHIO - \$32,572 to the Small Farm Institute, Fresno, Ohio, to help grass-based beef producers market their products directly to consumers at farmers markets by conducting a series of workshops to identify strategies for production, processing, preparation and marketing grass-fed beef products.

OKLAHOMA - \$62,270 to the Oklahoma Black Historical Research Project, Inc., Wewoka, Okla., to establish, promote and manage the Eastside Farmers Market in an inner-city Oklahoma City neighborhood, and train more than 250 small, limited-resource farmers in 44 counties to market their produce at farmers markets throughout the state.

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\$66,200 to the Oklahoma Food Cooperative, Oklahoma City, Okla., to enhance its distribution system with better transportation and computerized recordkeeping equipment so it can expedite the delivery of produce using a web-based marketing and ordering system for regional producers.

OREGON - \$26,500 to the Rogue Initiative for a Vital Economy, Ashland, Ore., to locate and design two permanent Jackson County farmers market sites based on surveys of vendors, as well as current and future customers, in order to meet customer demand and increase direct farm sales in Southern Oregon.

\$47,236 to Adelante Mujeres, Forest Grove, Ore., to purchase and implement EBT/debit/credit technology, provide training and marketing support to Hispanic and other minority farmers and vendors and develop a marketing plan to attract low-income and senior citizen customers.

PENNSYLVANIA - \$45,000 to the Penn's Corner Farm Alliance, Pittsburgh, Penn., to purchase refrigerated storage and other necessary equipment to improve the farm cooperative's infrastructure capacity to serve its current distribution channels.

\$23,091 to the Food Trust, Philadelphia, Penn., to implement a pilot program that will develop and evaluate a model for EBT/credit/debit sales and train vendors in its use at the Clark Park Farmers Market in west Philadelphia, and implement a marketing campaign to increase patronage by food stamp recipients and other underserved consumers.

RHODE ISLAND - \$50,000 to Farm Fresh Rhode Island, Providence, RI, to standardize market branding and applications at nine farmers markets; create a market manager's guide that will include standardized market operational tasks and rules; and purchase wireless EBT terminals, bilingual signage, advertisements and other promotional material to help increase farmers' sales to customers.

SOUTH DAKOTA - \$34,884 to Downtown Brookings, Inc, Brookings, So.Dak., to provide annual training to vendors in food safety, advertising, display, transportation and marketing at farmers markets; offer seasonal training and demonstrations to consumers in food handling and nutrition; and conduct surveys of vendors and customers to assess the effectiveness of project activities.

TEXAS - \$62,643 to The University of Texas - Pan American, Edinburg, Texas, to conduct research on the long-term feasibility of farmers markets in the region and to develop strategic planning and management practices, database access, training and other best practices for farmers markets comprised primarily of Hispanic farmers and consumers.

UTAH - \$15,893 to the Downtown Alliance, Salt Lake City, Utah, to pilot an alternative purchase program to purchase and utilize EBT and food stamp payment systems and design and implement a training and educational program for farmers market managers, more than 100 farm vendors, and food stamp recipients, to increase fresh food access and farmer sales.

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WASHINGTON - \$31,695 to the Spokane Farmers' Market Association, Spokane, Wash., to use promotional activities to establish on-site consumer nutrition education, particularly to low-income families and improve vendor sales through the establishment of EBT/credit/debit technology.

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