



Farmers Markets:

Good for your health, Good for your community, and good for the economy

The 2007 Census of Agriculture reported a remarkable \$1.2 billion in food sold directly from farmers to consumers. This is a 17% increase over the previous five years. The conclusion? More farmers are making more products directly available to more Americans in more ways. One of those ways is farmers markets.

Each year, more Americans in more communities get more of their food from farmers markets. In August, 2008, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) reported 4,685 farmers markets operating in the United States. This was a 170% increase over the last ten years. 15% of these markets operate in winter months.

More farmers markets means more opportunities to:

- support healthy lifestyles
- make fresh nutritious food available to more people
- strengthen communities
- preserve America's agricultural landscape and heritage

What is a farmers market?

Farmers markets vary from hundreds of food producers across a regional food system to just a few farmers collecting in a town square every month. Each market is a unique representation of its community, with a wide variety of products available for sale. Most farmers markets showcase local food, local producers, and local pride.

Support healthy lifestyles

Farmers markets...

- Offer unique varieties of fresh, nutritious food at the peak of flavor, directly from the grower
- Encourage walking, bicycling, and use of public transit
- Develop vibrant community centers
- Provide opportunities for fresh air, social interaction, and learning about healthy cooking and regional products

Make fresh nutritious food available to more people

Farmers markets...

- Redeem more than \$20 million in Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) vouchers to provide fresh fruits and vegetables to low income families
- Redeem \$16 million in Senior Farmers Market Nutrition program (SFMNP) vouchers, which provide fresh vegetables, fruits, herbs, and honey to low-income seniors



- Accept EBT cards that accompany the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Food Program (formerly known as food stamps)
- Donate unsold fresh produce to foodbanks, shelters and other social service agencies

Strengthen communities and stimulate local economies

Farmers markets...

- Grow jobs and strengthen local economies. In 2004, Iowa farmers markets generated 20.8 million in economic activity , directly creating 324 jobs
- Reduce the distance food travels. In 2008, more than 85% of farmers at Portland Farmers Market traveled 50 miles or less to get there, a small fraction of the distance traveled by most food in the United States.
- Revitalize downtowns. In 2003, 24% of shoppers at Portland, Oregon’s midweek market came downtown specifically to attend the market, then continued to shop downtown.
- Make local food affordable. Produce at Seattle farmers markets was up to 20 cents per pound less than at nearby food retailers.
- Attract new small businesses. Farmers markets have attracted new small businesses to downtown Oswego and Rochester, New York.

Preserve America’s agricultural landscape and heritage

Farmers markets...

- Grow opportunities for farmers. In 1999, Alabama had 17 farmers markets involving 234 farmers. By 2008, the state had 102 markets involving 1,064 farmers.
- Promote diversity. Between 2002-2007, the number of women farmers rose by almost 30%, and the number of Hispanic farm operators rose by more than 10%.
- Preserve agricultural land from over development. New York City’s Greenmarket relies on more than 27,300 acres of farmland, and 80% of participating farmers credit their business’ success to farmers markets.
- Keep farmers farming. Thirty five percent of farms near Ithaca, NY believe they would simply not exist if it was not for farmers market and direct sales in and around the city.

Support your farmers market and support your community.

Mission: To strengthen farmers markets for the benefit of farmers, consumers, and communities.

The Farmers Market Coalition is a 501(c)(3) representing farmers markets managers, farmers, state farmers market associations, and other organizations dedicated to helping farmers markets thrive in the long-term. Through education, networking, and advocacy, FMC works to help farmers markets nationwide maximize their capacity to serve farmers, consumers, and communities.

Farmers markets are good for everyone. Join us to make them even better.

www.FarmersMarketCoalition.org

