



Farmers Market Promotion Program

Creating market opportunities for American farmers • Expanding access to fresh foods for America's families • Facilitating entrepreneurship in our communities

BACKGROUND

The Farmers Market Coalition estimates that more than 140,000 agricultural producers sell at farmers markets, with more represented each year. Rapid growth in the number of farmers markets over the last decade means that nearly 80% of markets operating in 2012 did not exist in 2008. Farmers markets have a diverse spectrum of positive outcomes in an increasing number of communities. They encourage healthier eating patterns by increasing the variety and availability of fresh produce; provide a training ground for local farmers; facilitate innovative entrepreneurship;

and build social capital through an animated civic space. They are nimble and uniquely reflective of the assets and needs of their communities, requiring much less in capital for physical infrastructure than other retail outlets.

ABOUT FMPP

The Farmers Market Promotion Program (FMPP) was established in the 2002 Farm Bill through an amendment of the Farmer-to-Consumer Direct Marketing Act of 1976, to "...lower cost and increase the quality of food to such customers while providing increased financial returns to farmers."

Awarding its first grants in 2006, the program was revised and expanded in the 2008 Farm Bill to enhance the development, promotion, and expansion of farmers markets and direct marketing outlets like roadside stands, community supported agriculture (CSA) programs, and agritourism activities, with funding authorized at \$33 million over five years. Eligible applicants include non-profit corporations, agricultural cooperatives, producer networks and associations, local governments, public benefit and economic development corporations, regional farmers market authorities, and tribal governments.

Grantees are saying that FMPP...

"was the **catalyst for more local food** projects."

"permitted us to **secure additional funding** and leverage a second farmers market site in two neighboring communities."

"is one of few grant opportunities directed at **supporting family farmers using sustainable practices.**"

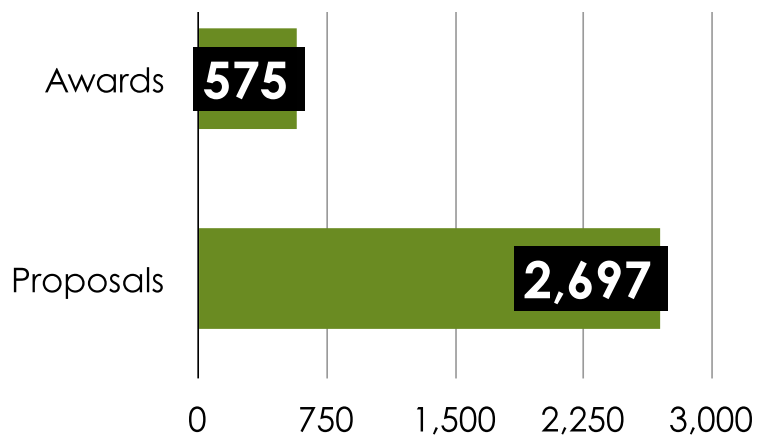
"provided the **experience and confidence** needed to secure a 501(c) (3) nonprofit designation for our market and to leverage an additional \$302,498 toward construction of a permanent market facility."

2006 - 2012
At a Glance

\$32,293,329

575 projects

50 States



FMPP attracts a wide variety of local, regional and state-level applicants with interests ranging from health to economic development to food security to sustainable agriculture—many of which have not sought or received USDA grants before. Since 2006, 21% of all proposals have been funded, with community demand for the program consistently outweighing available funds.

Between 2006 and 2012, awards ranged from \$2,000 to \$100,000, averaging \$56,162. As provisioned in the 2008 Farm Bill, no less than 10% of FMPP grant funds were allocated to electronic benefits transfer (EBT) for federal nutrition programs at farmers markets. Since 2008, nearly \$5.15 million (16%) of grant awards directly supported new implementation of EBT at markets, helping ensure healthy food access for low-income consumers and expands the customer base for the nation’s farmers.

WHY FMPP MATTERS

Market organizers, often limited by volunteer staffing, juggle many activities simultaneously, including coordinating of farmers, curating an appropriate product mix, conducting outreach, securing permits,

planning educational programming, and orchestrating many stakeholders. FMPP was established by Congress to act as a bridge to help direct-to-consumer outlets like farmers markets towards the path of self-sufficiency such that they can effectively yield economic and social returns to both rural and urban communities. The resources required by these nonprofit community organizations to get started and implement innovative programs are typically small. Evidence suggests that with a small and targeted infusion of funds, markets can become stable, identify and leverage community partners, facilitate volunteer staff, and establish viable operating and governance models that help local farmers compete in an increasingly sophisticated retail environment (O’Hara, 2010).

DEMAND FOR FMPP

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WHERE IS FMPP TODAY?

The 2008 Farm Bill and mandatory funding for FMPP expired on September 30, 2012, and neither the Farm Bill extension passed in January 2013 nor the Fiscal Year 2013 Appropriations Bill addressed this oversight. Therefore, USDA’s Agricultural Marketing Service could not issue a notice of funding availability in 2013. Senator Sherrod Brown (D-Ohio), and Representative Chellie Pingree (D-Maine), introduced the Local Farms, Food, and Jobs Act of 2013 (S. 679 and H.R.1414), which would amend Section 6 of the Farmer-to-Consumer Direct Marketing Act of 1976 to expand the current Farmers Market Promotion Program to \$20 million per year in mandatory Farm Bill funding to support not only direct producer-to-consumer marketing but also scaled up local and regional food marketing. The provision would also include an authorization for up to \$20 million per year in discretionary funding.