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### **Farmers Market Coalition Celebrates National Farmers Market Week**

August 4, 2017 - This week, U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue signed a [proclamation](#) declaring Aug. 6-12, 2017, as the 18th annual *National Farmers Market Week* (NFMW), a yearly celebration sponsored by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) that highlights the important role farmers markets play in the nation's food system. Jen Cheek, Executive Director of the [Farmers Market Coalition](#), a national organization committed to strengthening farmers markets, commended USDA's continued support of the event, citing ongoing public awareness efforts in support of local farmers and farmers markets as vital to their success.

"Farmers markets increase the availability of fresh produce, create jobs for rural and urban entrepreneurs, and offer nutritional and agricultural education to the public," said Cheek. "National Farmers Market Week highlights the unique benefits these markets bring to American agriculture, while drumming up new and continued support for the local farming businesses that sustain these benefits."

According to research conducted by the USDA, farmers and ranchers that sell directly to consumers at farmers markets have lower rates of bankruptcy and farm foreclosure than producers that rely solely on the wholesale contracts. "Farmers markets serve as a lifeline for many producers—whether they're beginning farmers looking for a place to start selling their produce, or established farms mitigating risk by diversifying their revenue streams," added Cheek.

Throughout National Farmers Market Week, farmers markets across the country will highlight their markets' unique impacts through events and observances. This year, FMC encouraged all markets to invite public officials to their National Farmers Market Week events, and provided [resources](#) to help facilitate introductions and media. Follow FMC's social media pages ([Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#)) for coverage of events taking place nationwide.

FMC staff will celebrate the week in Washington, DC, attending a policy forum hosted by the Federal Reserve Board in honor of the release of their [new report](#) titled, "*Harvesting Opportunity: The Power of Regional Food System Investments to Transform Communities*," and setting up shop at the [USDA Farmers Market](#) on August 11th. There, FMC staff will distribute [I 'Heart' Farmers Markets tattoos](#), and challenge market-goers to farmers market trivia questions for prizes. The winners of FMC's 2017 [Farmers](#)

[Market Poster Contest](#) will also be on display.

“The decision to buy directly from local farmers not only puts the freshest, most flavorful food on your dinner table, it has a very real impact on that farmer’s livelihood,” said Cheek. “At farmers markets, we meet our community, access affordable, healthy produce, and support family farmers who overwhelmingly use farming practices that protect our environment. These are all benefits that impact each of us, and are all reasons to support farmers markets not just this week, but all year long. FMC will continue to work hard to elevate these benefits to the public.”

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*The Farmers Market Coalition (FMC) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit dedicated to strengthening farmers markets for the benefit of farmers, consumers, and communities. For more information about the Farmers Market Coalition, visit*

[www.farmersmarketcoalition.org](http://www.farmersmarketcoalition.org)

