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**Local FARMS Act Puts Farmers Markets Front and Center**  
*Farmers Market Coalition Praises Bipartisan Effort*

Washington, DC, October 13, 2017 – This month, a bipartisan coalition led by Senator Sherrod Brown (D-OH) and Representatives Chellie Pingree (D-ME), Jeff Fortenberry (R-NE), and Sean Maloney (D-NY), introduced the [Local Food and Regional Market Supply Act](#) (the “Local FARMS Act”) to drive the 2018 Farm Bill’s promise to spur economic growth in rural communities while connecting all Americans to fresh, regionally-grown food. The [Farmers Market Coalition](#) (FMC), a national nonprofit dedicated to supporting farmers markets, joined [National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition](#) (NSAC), in praising the bipartisan coalition for prioritizing the development of new markets for farmers and expanded healthy food access for American families.

"The Local FARMS Act streamlines and enhances programs that are critical to the ongoing development of the farmers market industry" said Farmers Market Coalition Executive Director, Jen Cheek. "The Act helps to ensure, small scale american farmers have access to viable markets for the fruits of their labor."

The Local FARMS Act supports the expansion of new market opportunities for American family farmers by expanding the [Farmers Market and Local Food Promotion Program](#) (FMPP). Since FMPP’s creation, the number of farmers markets in America has more than doubled from 3,137 to over 8,684 today. These markets, along with other direct-to-consumer marketing opportunities, represent a \$3 billion market and provide a livelihood for roughly 110,000 American farmers and ranchers.

Farmers from across the country have been quick to praise the Local FARMS Act, including Will Reed of [Native Son Farm](#), a certified Naturally Grown operation out of Tupelo, MS, and chairman of the board for the [Mississippi Sustainable Agriculture Network](#).

“From economic development to community health, local food production is key to solving many of the challenges facing Mississippi,” said Reed. “The Local FARMS Act will work to strengthen our local food system by helping to bridge the gaps that exist between local farmers and larger institutional buyers such as schools and hospitals.”

As the American farm economy struggles through a multi-year downturn, family farmers have increasingly turned to opportunities in the local and regional food markets as a way of sustaining

and even growing their businesses. USDA's Economic Research Service has found that farmers' bets on local have paid off – farmers who market food directly to consumers have a greater chance of remaining in business than similarly sized farms that market through traditional channels.

For more information, a [summary](#) and [detailed outline](#) of the Local FARMS Act are available on the NSAC website.

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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)*