



PROGRAM ANNOUNCEMENT



AGRICULTURAL MARKETING SERVICE

United States Department of Agriculture ♦ 1400 Independence Ave., SW ♦ Room 3510-S
Washington, DC 20250 ♦ (202) 720-8998 ♦ World Wide Web: <http://www.ams.usda.gov>

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Joan Shaffer (202) 720-8998

joan.shaffer@usda.gov

Billy Cox (202) 720-8998

billy.cox@usda.gov

NUMBER OF FARMERS MARKETS CONTINUES TO RISE IN U.S.

WASHINGTON, Sept. 19, 2008 – The number of farmers markets in the United States continues to grow, reports USDA’s Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS), reaching a total of 4,685 in August 2008. This represents a 6.8 percent increase since mid-August 2006, when AMS reported 4,385 farmers markets nationwide.

“More and more consumers are discovering the wide array of fresh, locally grown produce available at farmers markets,” said AMS Administrator Lloyd Day. “Another reason for their popularity is food buyers like the opportunity to interact with the producers.” Day pointed out since 1994, when AMS began to track farmers markets, the number of farmers markets nationwide has grown by nearly 3,000.

AMS focuses on direct-to-consumer marketing issues and continually updates a comprehensive list of U.S. farmers markets. The database can be accessed on-line at <http://apps.ams.usda.gov/FarmersMarkets>.

In March, AMS launched its survey, contacting State Departments of Agriculture, state farmers market associations and other direct marketing organizations for information on the 2008 market season. The deadline was July 1.

AMS will continue to update the National Directory of Farmers Markets Web site. New information about markets and market contacts should be sent to Velma Lakins, Agricultural Marketing Specialist, at velma.lakins@usda.gov. Additional background information on recent market trends is available at <http://www.ams.usda.gov/FarmersMarkets>.

AMS also supports farmers markets by conducting research on emerging trends in farmers’ market operations and practices. AMS also publishes reference material for distribution to farm vendors, farmers’ market managers and interested members of the general public.

AMS coordinates the operation of seasonal farmers markets at USDA headquarters in Washington, D.C., and works with the U.S. Department of Transportation, the Carver Office Building in Beltsville, Md. and the Bannister Federal Complex in Kansas City, MO., to help support their farmers markets.

AMS staff analyzes the feasibility of planned renovation or the construction of projects at several types of food market facilities, including farmers markets. AMS also develops conceptual designs of facilities, estimating costs and assessing expected levels of market patronage. Typically such research is carried out in concert with state or local governments or non-profit agencies.